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SONNETS



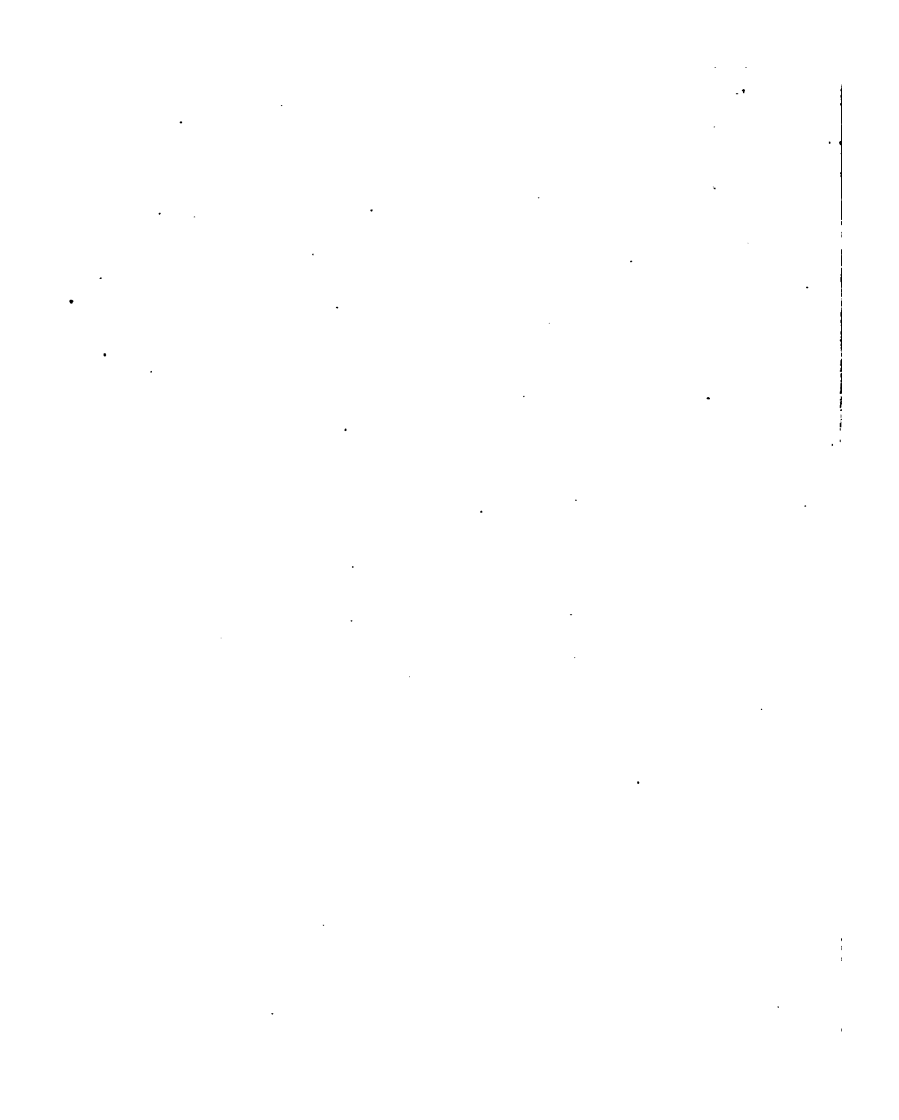
CHARLES TOMLINSON



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# SONNETS.

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**LONDON:**

**R. CLAY, SONS, AND TAYLOR,**

**BREAD STREET HILL.**

*In Memory of my Wife.*

DEVOTED love was thine, a soul refined,  
A rare intelligence 'neath gentle mien,  
Embodying goodness with an air serene,  
Soft voice, bright look reflecting the candid mind ;

Warm sympathy with all of human kind,  
And ruth 'twixt brute and suffering ever seen,  
While a divine unselfishness hath been  
The unconscious means the heavenly pearl to find.

Such, Dearest, Thou ! A loftier poet's lays  
Should sing of Thee in numbers far more sweet,  
And weave thy virtues into nobler phrase ;

But still my Muse suggests, from her low seat,  
That I should dedicate some words of praise  
To Thee, with these poor Sonnets—till we meet.



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PART I.

*ON THE STRUCTURE OF THE SONNET.*



## I.

### ON THE STRUCTURE OF THE SONNET.

THE sonnet, being one of the most precious jewels of the poetical casket, requires that its facets be well defined by sharply-cut boundary lines. Whatever thought be expressed therein, the mode of expression, from the very nature of the composition, becomes important. It must not contain a word too much or too little ; it must not be felt that the fourteenth line is in excess, or that a fifteenth is wanting ; it must not be crowded with imagery, or wander from one simile to another ; but develop a single thought simply and naturally, and wind up impressively ; or, according to the Portuguese aphorism, “A sonnet ought to be shut with a golden key.”

## PART I.

The sonnet, as we find it in the perfect expression of Dante and Petrarch, is an organic structure, consisting of limbs or members, which have their appropriate functions, and also appropriate terminations, all well defined. The Italian sonnet consists of a first and second quatrain and a first and second tercet. The quatrains must not include more than two rhymes (seeing that a greater number would disturb the functional harmony that ought to subsist between them); but the tercets, for the sake of variety, may be allowed three rhymes. The most usual arrangement of the quatrains is for the first line to rhyme with the fourth, fifth, and eighth; and the second line with the third, sixth, and seventh. This arrangement may be expressed in a numerical formula in which the same figures indicate the same rhymes:—

I 2 2 I, I 2 2 I.

In some cases, for the sake of variety, these rhymes are alternated, thus:—

I 2 I 2, I 2 I 2.

## STRUCTURE.

The most usual arrangement of the three rhymes of the tercets is thus :—

3 4 5, 3 4 5.

The next most common is :—

3 4 5, 4 3 5.

But where only two rhymes are employed they are, of course, alternated :—

3 4 3, 4 3 4,

in which case the quatrains ought not to be also in alternate rhyme.

In classifying the three hundred and seventeen sonnets of Petrarch, it will be found that one hundred and sixteen, or upwards of one-third of the total number, are arranged thus :—

1 2 2 1, 1 2 2 1

3 4 5, 3 4 5.

In upwards of another third, or in one hundred and seven sonnets, while the quatrains follow the same

## PART I.

arrangement the tercets are in alternate rhyme, so that this type may be thus represented :—

I 2 2 I, I 2 2 I  
3 4 3, 4 3 4.

In sixty-seven sonnets the quatrains still remain the same, but the tercets are again varied thus :—

I 2 2 I, I 2 2 I  
3 4 5, 4 3 5.

Thus, in two hundred and ninety out of three hundred and seventeen sonnets the rhymes in the quatrains follow the same law ; and in nearly all the remaining twenty-seven sonnets the quatrains are either regular as above, or in alternate rhyme, while the tercets are a little more varied.

But whatever the arrangement, the rhymes must fall naturally in their places, and never have the appearance of being dragged in, or obtruded, or suggest the idea that the tyranny of rhyme has forced in a less expressive word to the exclusion of a more appropriate one.

## STRUCTURE.

Even so great a master of the sonnet as Wordsworth occasionally fails to comply with these conditions. For example, in the twelfth of the Miscellaneous Sonnets, yielding to the hard necessity of rhyme, he allows himself to use such an expression as this :—

“O Sleep ! thou art to me  
A Fly, that up and down himself doth shove  
Upon a fretful rivulet, now above,  
Now on the water.”

And in the eleventh :—

“Or quit the stars with a lingering farewell—how  
Shall Fancy pay to thee a grateful vow ?”

In the fifteenth sonnet (Part II.) the lightnings are made to *prowl* in order to rhyme to the thunder's *growl*, an expression that misrepresents the swift motion of lightning.

In a correct sonnet, that is, correct as to form, the rhymes of the quatrains should not play upon the

## PART I.

same vowel, as is done in Wordsworth's twenty-third of the Miscellaneous Sonnets (Part I.), thus :—

<i>gay</i>	<i>grace</i>	<i>place</i>	<i>day</i>
<i>display</i>	<i>face</i>	<i>pace</i>	<i>way;</i>

but be contrasted thus :—

<i>star</i>	<i>love</i>	<i>move</i>	<i>afar.</i>
-------------	-------------	-------------	--------------

The rhymes of the tercets should also be varied, not only with respect to each other, but also as compared with those of the quatrains ; that is, the tercet rhymes should not play upon the same vowels as those of the quatrains.

It is not always easy to comply with such conditions as the above amidst the poverty of English monosyllabic rhymes, while it is quite easy to do so in the Italian and Spanish languages, which possess an abundant wealth of polysyllabic rhymes.

The division of the sonnet into quatrains and tercets excludes of course the terminal couplet, which is so greatly favoured in what is called the

## STRUCTURE.

English sonnet ; and also the terminal Alexandrine ; for, according to the Italian theory, one line cannot be metrically stronger than another, although it may be poetically so ; and indeed, the sonnet is likely to be the more perfect when its poetical strength goes on accumulating, until it culminates in the second tercet, and the last line of that. In Italian sonnet poetry one line may be much fuller than another, but it always admits of being read by elision as an eleven syllable verse.

The foregoing remarks refer to the regular Italian sonnet. There are other forms, such as the *caudated*, or sonnets with a tail, an example of which is given further on,<sup>1</sup> as also an example of a sonnet in *dialogue*, of which Petrarch has three examples, (lxiii. *Occhi piangete* ; cxvii. *Che fai alma ?* and clxxxvi. *Liete e pensose*), and an *answering* sonnet, in which rhymes in

<sup>1</sup> Francesco Berni is a master in this form. In some of his examples the tail greatly exceeds the body in length ; but his subjects are mostly comic.

## PART I.

the same order of vowels are used as in the sonnet to which it is a reply. The Italians also have *mute* sonnets, in which the rhymes are monosyllabic, as in English, but such sonnets are devoted to jocose subjects ; then there are *iterating* or *continuous* sonnets, in which the same two words are used for the endings of the quatrains and the same three for the tercets as in Petrarch's sixteenth sonnet, *Quand' io son tutto volto in quella parte* ; *retrograde* sonnets which read the same forwards and backwards ; *chained* or *linked* sonnets, in which each successive line derives one of its rhymes from the preceding stanza ; *interwoven* sonnets, where the rhymes occur in the middle as well as at the end of the lines.

But to return to the regular Italian sonnet. It will greatly assist the sonneteer in the attainment of clearness of expression if he bear in mind the functions of the four parts of the sonnet. Some kind of proposition should be made in the first quatrain, and illustrated in the second ; while the first tercet should

## STRUCTURE.

prepare for the conclusion which is to be concisely and impressively stated in the second. Take by way of example <sup>1</sup> Petrarch's eighty-third sonnet addressed to his friend Captain Pandolpho Malatesta, Lord of Rimini :—

*L'aspettata virtù che 'n voi fioriva  
Quando Amor cominciò darvi battaglia,  
Produce or frutto che quel fiore agguaglia,  
E che mia speme far venire a riva.*

*Però mi dice 'l cor, ch' io in carte scriva  
Cosa onde 'l vostro nome in pregio saglia ;  
Che 'n nulla parte si saldo s'intaglia,  
Per far di marmo una persona viva.*

*Credete voi che Cesare, o Marcello,  
O Paolo, od African fossi cotali  
Per incude giammai, nè per martello ?*

*Pandolpho mio, quest opere son frali  
Al lungo andar ; ma 'l nostro studio è quello  
Che fa per fama gli uomini immortali.*

<sup>1</sup> This analysis has already been given in my book on the Sonnet ; but as it is so well adapted to the purpose in hand the reader will probably excuse its repetition here.

## PART I.

1st Q.—The anticipated virtue which flourished in you when Love commenced to give you battle, now produces fruit which equals the flower and brings my hope safely ashore.

2nd Q.—Hence my heart tells me that I write down things that may exalt your name, which, cut in marble, are in no way so durable as to make a person live.

1st T.—Think you that Cæsar or Marcellus, or Paul (*i.e.* Paulus Æmilius, the younger), or Africanus were ever such through any work of anvil or of mallet?

2nd T.—O my Pandolpho ! these works are frail in the long run ; but our art (*i.e.* the poet's) is that which makes men immortal through fame.

It will be observed that in this sonnet the rhymes are sufficiently varied, the *a* in *aglia* in the quatrains not having quite the same sound as the *a* in *ali* in the tercets ; also that the four parts of the sonnet are kept quite distinct, each part being closed with a full-point.<sup>1</sup>

In the first quatrain the poet pays a tribute to the

<sup>1</sup> In a collection of 586 Italian sonnets by various hands, published at Paris in 1731, the second quatrain is closed with a full point, except in seventy-five examples where a colon is used ; and this might in nearly every instance be a full point.

## STRUCTURE.

virtue or bravery of his friend as a reason for the desire expressed in the second quatrain to write something in his praise which may endure longer than marble. Then the examples in the first tercet prepare for the conclusion in the second, which is strictly syllogistic :—

That which confers lasting fame endures for ever,  
The work of the poet endures for ever,  
∴ The work of the poet confers lasting fame.

or,

That which confers lasting fame endures for ever,  
The work of the sculptor does not endure for ever,  
∴ The work of the sculptor does not confer lasting fame.

The next example is Petrarch's three hundred and thirteenth sonnet, in which the first quatrain is used to show the need of, and thus justify, the introduction of a prayer which occupies the remainder of the sonnet. The first tercet follows naturally from the second quatrain, and leads to the solemn and impressive conclusion of the second tercet. The

PART I.

parts, although so intimately connected, are, nevertheless, kept distinct from each other, and every line is full of meaning beautifully expressed.

*I'vo piangendo i miei passati tempi,  
I quai posi in amar cosa mortale,  
Senza levarmi a volo, avend'io l'ale,  
Per dar forse di me non bassi esempi.*

*Tu, che vedi i miei mali indegni ed empi,  
Re del Cielo, invisibile, immortale,  
Soccorri all' alma disviata e frale,  
E'l suo difetto di tua grazia adempi.*

*Si che, s' io vissi in guerra ed in tempesta,  
Mora in pace ed in porto; e se la stanza  
Fu vana, almen sia la partita onesta.*

*A quel poco di viver, che m' avanza,  
Ed al morir degni esser tua man presta:  
Tu sai ben che 'n altrui non ho speranza.*

I still lament, with tears, the years gone by,  
Wasted in loving but a mortal thing;  
Though I could soar, not rising on the wing  
To lofty work, which might perchance not die.

## STRUCTURE.

O Thou ! who knowest my impiety,  
Invisible, immortal, heavenly King !  
To my frail wandering soul some succour bring;  
And its defects of Thy own grace supply.

So that if tempest-toss'd, in strife I be,  
At peace, in port, let me my life resign,  
Though spent in vain, yet close in piety.

In that short span of life I yet call mine,  
And in death's hour, extend Thy hand to me ;  
Thou know'st I trust no other aid but Thine.

Of the three hundred and seventeen sonnets of Petrarch there are only twenty of which Laura is not the subject. The two hundred and ninety-seven Luran sonnets are divided into two unequal parts, *Laura in vita* and *Laura in morte*, the former including upwards of two-thirds of the number. Yet, in so extensive a series on one subject, there is very little repetition, scarcely two sonnets being poetically alike, although, as we have seen, there is but little metrical variety ; for, having once settled

## PART I.

the form, the thought is capable, in the hands of the master, of being expressed with the greatest clearness and precision. This is a wonderful tribute to the virtues and graces of a lovely woman, from the time when she first appeared before the poet, amid the beautiful scenery of Vaucluse, as a young girl (*tenero fiore*, "a tender flower)," and died<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> According to Velutello, Laura was born in 1314; her death in 1348 is recorded in Sonnet CCXC. :—

*"Sai che 'n mille trecento quarant' otto  
Il dì sesto d' Aprile, in l'ora prima  
Del corpo uscìo quell' anima beata."*

"Thou know'st that in thirteen hundred forty-eight  
The sixth day of April at the hour of prime  
That sainted soul from out her body fled."

In Sonnet CLXXVI. is given the date when the poet first met Laura :

*"Mille trecento ventisette appunto  
Sull'ora prima il dì sesto d' Aprile."*

In 1327, also on the 6th of April, at the hour of prime; that is, six o'clock A.M. Laura was then in her thirteenth year.

## STRUCTURE.

unmarried, at the age of thirty-four : —

*E compie' mia giornata innanzi sera.*

(And closed my day before the eve was near.)

—SONNET CCLXI.

It is not necessary to repeat in this place the arguments contained in the Essay "On the identification of Laura," inserted in the Appendix to my book on the Sonnet published in 1874 ; but a translation of the seventy-ninth sonnet, not included in that work, may here be given.

## SONNET LXXIX.

*Quella fenestra, ove l'un Sol si vede.*

Yon window where one Sun is sometimes found,  
As suits her pleasure ; the other near mid-day ;  
Is that where the cold wind holds noisy sway,  
In the short days, when Boreas rules around.

## PART I.

There is her rocky seat, when noon comes round,  
Where with herself her pensive fancies play ;  
On many a path her footsteps point the way,  
Or her fair form casts shadows on the ground.

There is the cruel spot where Love assailed,  
In the young Spring,—that day comes year by year  
To fret the wounds I then alas ! received.

That face, that voice, within my heart I bear ;  
Their influence o'er me has so long prevailed,  
That with dim eyes I grieve, as I have grieved.

The places referred to in this sonnet clearly belong, as Velutello supposes, to the Sorga, at or near its source, and not to Avignon, as De Sade and some of the later commentators indicate. The window of Laura's chamber is described as facing the north, where she, a living sun, showed herself at her own good pleasure, while the natural sun only shone upon it about mid-day. Tassoni and Castelvetro suppose that the stone or rock (*l' sasso*) on which she was accustomed to sit and meditate, was a stone seat in front of the house. This is a strange place for a young lady to occupy, supposing the house to have been in the bustling city of Avignon ; but it becomes intelligible with reference to Vaucluse or Cabrières ; where as we learn from

## STRUCTURE.

some of the other poems, Laura was accustomed to sit and meditate ; as for example in the 205th sonnet—

“O flower-enamelled hill! fresh, shady, green,  
Where musing now, now bent on minstrelsy,  
An angel seated there she seems to be,” &c.

But in the sonnet before us the poet goes on to describe the paths to which her footsteps point the way, and the places on which her shadow falls. These places would hardly be in a crowded city. But the locality is clearly defined in the first tercet, in which the poet refers to the spot where he first saw Laura in the early spring-time ; and we know from several of the poems that this was in the country, as in the Madrigal *Nova Angeletta*, &c.

“She stretched a silken cord my way before  
Where the fresh grass had made the pathway green.”

Gesualdo, one of the oldest of the commentators, whose book is dated 223 years before that of De Sade, referring to the foregoing passage, describes the poet *tra le fiorite e verdi piagge di Sorga incontrandogli Madonna Laura allhora fanciuletta*, &c.

It was amidst the beautiful and romantic scenery here referred to that the poet derived his inspiration ; and the wonderful variety observed in his sonnets is

## PART I.

due, in great measure, to the natural objects which he connects with the object of his desire or regret. In having to quit his beloved hills for a time on one of those political missions which often engaged his skill, he describes his anguish as increasing with the distance, and naturally and gracefully connects himself with the figure of a wounded stag.

### CLXXIV.

*I dolei colli, ov 'io lasciai me stesso.*

In leaving you, sweet hills ! I leave behind  
My very self ; ne'er distant you remain,  
But rise before me, and bring back the pain  
Of that fond burden Love to me assigned.

I often marvel, pondering in my mind,  
That, travelling far, I cannot freedom gain  
From the dear yoke I try to loose in vain,  
Which distance serves but closer still to bind.

The stag, who by the arrow stricken sore,  
The poisoned iron fretting in his side,  
Flees, but the more he flees he suffers more ;

### STRUCTURE.

So I, who in my heart that arrow hide,  
Which to consume and partly please hath power,  
Dissolve with grief, by flight am sorely tried.

On another occasion the poet thus tunefully connects his own condition with that of a singing-bird at the beginning of winter :—

### CCCXVII.

*Vago augelletto, che cantando vai.*

O wandering bird ! that singest on alway,  
Or mournest o'er the happy time gone by,  
Seeing the long, long nights and winter nigh,  
Bright days departed and the months so gay.

If, as thou know'st the cause of thy dismay,  
Thou knew'st the like sad state in which I sigh,  
Straight to this troubled bosom thou would'st fly,  
And blend with mine thy melancholy lay.

But yet I know not if thy lot be mine,  
For she may live for whom thou pour'st that strain :  
'Gainst me, alas ! both Death and Heaven combine.

## PART I.

But as the hours their hue from winter gain,  
And sweet and bitter years their memories join,  
So I, in tender notes, with thee complain.

For the sake of illustrating the wonderful variety of Petrarch's style, while still obeying the laws of the sonnet, one more example may be quoted.

## CCLXI.

*Levommi il mio pensier in parte ov' era.*

On wings of thought I soared to regions where  
She whom I seek, but here on earth in vain,  
Dwells among those who the third heaven gain,  
And saw her lovelier and less haughty there.

She took my hand and said—"In this bright sphere,  
Unless my wish deceive, we meet again ;  
Lo ! I am she who caused thee strife and pain,  
And closed my day before the eve was near.

"My bliss no human thought can understand :  
I only wait for thee and that fair veil  
So loved by thee, now by the grave retained."

## STRUCTURE.

She ceased, ah why ! and why let loose my hand !  
 Such chaste and tender words could so prevail,—  
 A little more, I had in heaven remained.

Some further specimens of Petrarch's method, so far as translation may serve the purpose, are included in Part III.

The English sonnet in the hands of such great masters as Spenser and Shakspeare consists of three elegiac stanzas of four lines each in alternate rhyme, and finishing with a rhymed couplet. Spenser links his second stanza with the first, and the third with the second by taking up the closing rhyme of each stanza for the first and third lines of the next. Shakspeare does not submit his poem to any such condition. The two forms are represented in the following formulæ :—

Spenser.

1	2	1	2
2	3	2	3
3	4	3	4
	5	5	

Shakspeare.

1	2	1	2
3	4	3	4
5	6	5	6
	7	7	

## PART I.

It will be seen that this kind of structure is essentially different from the Italian type. It cannot be divided into a major and a minor, as the Italians sometimes name the quatrains and the tercets: for there are no tercets to exercise functions distinct from those of the quatrains. Indeed no sufficient reason appears for limiting the length to three quatrains and a couplet. Moreover, the couplet standing by itself, ought to contain a striking conclusion, so well expressed as to cling to the memory; but it requires a great master to achieve such a result; and in a large number of sonnets the concluding couplet is feeble.

Neither of the above forms seems to have taken permanent root in our poetry. The Earl of Surrey adopted Shakspere's form with some variations, but Drummond is more or less Petrarchan both in form and spirit. Milton made use of the Italian form with occasional transgressions; but after him the sonnet was almost entirely neglected until it was revived by

## STRUCTURE.

Bowles, whose structure follows no fixed law, except as to length. Both he and Wordsworth deal with quatrains and tercets, but do not as a rule keep them distinct. I quote an example almost at random, namely, the tenth of Wordsworth's Miscellaneous Sonnets, Part I.<sup>1</sup> :—

“ Why, Minstrel, these untuneful murmurings—  
Dull, flagging notes that with each other jar? ”  
“ Think, gentle Lady, of a Harp so far  
From its own country, and forgive the strings.”  
A simple answer ! but even so forth springs,  
From the Castalian fountain of the heart,  
The Poetry of Life, and all *that* art  
Divine of words quickening insensate things.  
From the submissive necks of guiltless men  
Stretched on the block, the glittering axe recoils ;  
Sun, moon, and stars, all struggle in the toils  
Of mortal sympathy ; what wonder then  
That the poor Harp distempered music yields  
To its sad Lord, far from its native fields ?

<sup>1</sup> The Edition referred to here, and also at pp. 7 and 8, is the single volume of the date 1847.

## PART I.

The following formula represents the structure of this sonnet ;—

I 2 2 I

I 3 3 I

4 5 5 4

6 6,

by which arrangement, the tercets disappear altogether.

The idea of the sonnet is good, namely, that the harper and his harp are out of tune, because they are not in sympathy with exile ; but it is not worked out with the simplicity that belongs to the subject, and properly belongs to every sonnet. Even supposing that history confirmed the statement about the glittering axe, so strong a figure is not in keeping with the simple nature of the subject ; to say nothing of sun, moon, and stars. It may also be noted that the word *that* in the second quatrain being short, ought not to be italicised.

There has been a good deal of eloquent writing of late in defence of the English sonnet without any very

## STRUCTURE.

clear definition as to its structure. If the English sonnet is to consist of three elegiac quatrains, linked or unlinked, and a rhymed couplet, and the sonneteer consents to be bound by that form, there is nothing to complain of. But when, as is too often the case, he professes to deal with quatrains and tercets, and does not obey their law, the critic cannot be so lenient, seeing that, in too many cases, the result is a slovenly hybrid, which is neither English nor Italian in form, while the thought is too often not worked out with the clear precision required by the nature of the composition. Generally the quatrains are in excess, thereby leaving the substance of the tercets in defect ; while the unity of the quatrains is disturbed by a new set of rhymes in the second ; and the tercets are often equally damaged by the terminating couplet.

Of course in the hands of a great poet rules are but fragile bands, and the splendour of the performance may conceal defects in the form. Those writers who defend Wordsworth take him at his best, and make

## PART I.

his masterpieces condone much slovenly work. It seems to me not only that Wordsworth has written too many sonnets, but that he has applied the sonnet to purposes for which it is unfitted, as in the Duddon Series, where this form is used for description merely, or chiefly ; so that a single sonnet detached from its place in the series is incomplete in itself, if not unintelligible ; and even in its place no reason is evident for the machinery of quatrains and tercets, seeing that they deal equally with description, which usually prevents the application of the golden key at the close. But in many of his sonnets where the poet falls, either consciously or not, into the Italian form in its integrity, he produces some of the finest examples in the language. Witness his sonnet to Haydon :—  
“ High is our calling, friend ! ”

It need scarcely be said that I am not raising a question as to Wordsworth's lofty fame as a poet. I am endeavouring to persuade those who have not his poetical power, but who promote their own culture by

## STRUCTURE.

endeavouring to put their thoughts into sonnet form, how much more powerful a weapon their pens would become if they submitted to the laws of the Italian sonnet, or even if they followed the model of Shakspeare or of Spenser. At any rate they should be consistent, and not torture the form into any shape at will.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning adopted the Italian form with some license, and has produced sonnets which are among the most fragrant flowers of every anthology. But even these exquisite productions would have been still more perfect had no such license been taken.

Many English readers and writers of poetry object to what appears to them to be the rigid rules of the Italian sonnet. They prefer to write a short poem in fourteen lines and to call it a sonnet. Examples of this kind of writing are of frequent occurrence, especially in periodical literature, and I venture to think that this looseness of structure is generally the

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## PART I.

result of looseness of thought ; but that when the thought is clearly conceived and expressed, the form, while it contributes to, also shares in a satisfactory result. It is painful to read sonnets where the thought is too thin to cover fourteen lines, and has to be eked out by means of expletives, or similes, or metaphors, that do not belong, or remotely belong, to the subject ; or too full for the fourteen line limit, so that it produces the effect of crowding. But the former fault, that of diffuseness, is the more common, and mars more or less some of the finest thoughts in poetry, as for example in Blanco White's well-known sonnet on "Night and Death," in which the subject thought is so exquisite that the expression of it ought to be flawless ; and yet we have the line,

"Whilst fly and leaf and insect stood revealed "

and we naturally ask if *fly*, why *insect*, and if *insect* why *fly* ? And again,

"Yet 'neath a curtain of translucent dew."

## STRUCTURE.

Dew never forms a curtain, for this conveys the idea of something hanging down vertically, whereas dew is deposited in a horizontal stratum. There are other objections that might be made, the chief of which is as to the form, which consists of three quatrains and a rhymed couplet; the third quatrain having no formal connection with the other two or with the terminal couplet.

It may be remarked that the Italian method of printing a sonnet, namely, by indenting three lines in each quatrain, and two in each tercet, and also by separating the four parts from each other by means of spaces, is useful both to the writer and to the reader by keeping the several parts distinct from each other. The English do not usually adopt this method, but make all the lines, with the exception perhaps of the first, range together. In Mr. Waddington's recently published charming volume, *English Sonnets by Living Writers*, a mixed method is judiciously adopted; for how is it possible to print a sonnet in the form of

## PART I.

quatrains and tercets where none exist, but in some examples a number of couplets strung together to make up fourteen lines? And we are compelled further to ask why seven couplets? Why not five or ten or any other number?

It is not to be supposed that there is any magic influence in quatrains and tercets that will enable a bad poet to write good poetry. Rightly understood, the conditions under which the best Italian writers have placed the sonnet serve to assist the writer in giving a more accurate expression to his thought. Those who object to this restraint object to an example of method of a striking character. They object in fact to order, design, and the finished result produced thereby. They fancy that the poetic power ought to be as free from shackles as possible in order that the divine afflatus may have free play. Petrarch did not reason in this manner. In his solitary wanderings among the beautiful scenery of Vaucluse he jotted down the poetical thoughts that were inspired by

## STRUCTURE.

Nature or by his own heart and imagination at the time. He thus produced many a sonnet in the rough, and afterwards during weeks and months would take it up from time to time and endeavour to give perfection to the form, at the same time being careful to employ the best words without defect or excess, frequently changing one word for another until he was at length satisfied with the finished result. Take, for example, the following, his twenty-eighth sonnet:—

*Solo e pensoso i più deserti campi  
Vo misurando a passi tardi e lenti;  
E gli occhi porto, per fuggir, intenti,  
Dove vestigio uman l'arena stampi.*

*Altro schermo non trovo, che mi scampi  
Dal manifesto accorger delle genti:  
Perchè negli atti d'allegrezza spenti  
Di fuor si legge, com' io dentro avvampi:*

*Si ch' io mi credo omai, che monti, e piagge,  
E fiumi e selve sappian di che tempre  
Sia la mia vita, ch' è celata altrui.*

PART I.

*Ma pur si aspre vie, nè si selvagge  
Cercar non so, ch' Amor non venga sempre  
Ragionando con meco, ed io con lui.*

Alone and pensive, the most desert land,  
I measure o'er with loitering pace and slow ;  
Gazing around me that I may not go  
Where trace of human footsteps marks the sand.

No other refuge have I at command,  
From idler's recognition ; for I know  
I bear the outward marks of inward woe ;  
Of joys consumed by Love's unsparing hand.

So that I now believe my life's sad mood  
Is known to woods and streams, to hill and plain,  
The life that I from others would conceal :

I know not where to find a wild rough road,  
But Love to me will always access gain,  
And he to me, and I to him appeal.

There are few persons with any poetical sympathy  
who have not written sonnets. One can scarcely take

## STRUCTURE.

up a literary paper or magazine without meeting with them. I venture to suggest to such writers that they would greatly improve their own culture and increase their happiness by endeavouring to comply with the conditions to which the great masters of the art themselves submitted. They will thus improve their own powers of poetical expression, and certainly add to the pleasure of their readers.

The sonnets contained in the second part of this little volume are intended to be practical illustrations of the theory I have adopted. Without pretending to be anything more than an amateur I have found pleasure and occupation in these attempts to work out with the logical clearness that the form suggested, or at least that I was able to command, such thoughts as occurred to me from time to time, partly arising out of my profession as a scientific man,<sup>1</sup> and partly

<sup>1</sup> In two or three of the sonnets on scientific subjects I have derived hints from Lewes's *Aristotle* and *History of Philosophy*, and also from Whewell's *History of the Inductive Sciences*.

## PART I.

due to the interest that all educated persons must feel in the great problems of life. I have also added a few examples of a more personal character.

The production of this little volume is due to the love of the subject and to the leisure which old age generally brings ; but it will be gratifying to know that the reader, who must be fond of sonnets if he condescend to open this book, fortifying himself with a knowledge of the Italian method, should endeavour to work out his own thoughts in the sonnet form, taking care to make the idea or thought of each effort as clear as possible, to avoid useless words, especially adjectives, unless very telling ones, and to make his language as direct as possible ; that is, to place the words as far as may be possible in their natural order, avoiding inversions and other complications. It is a not uncommon mistake to suppose that poetry should differ from prose by an inverted form of expression, whereas the best poetry ought not to differ from the best prose except

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in the accessories of rhyme and rhythm ; indeed the best prose is nearly always rhythmic. Any one who endeavours to conform to these conditions will have received a lesson in culture which in itself ought to be a sufficient recompense for the pains bestowed, even though his compositions be limited to the circle of his friends.

And this leads me to state another, and indeed the chief motive for bringing out this little book.

As I do not suppose the public will care to read my sonnets I have printed only a small edition, chiefly for circulation among my remaining friends and acquaintances. Should any one outside that circle wish to possess a copy, my booksellers, whose names are on the title-page, will supply it. Even while writing this paragraph, Death is again busy in removing some of those who were my companions in boyhood ; and it is not likely that he will much longer neglect to summon me. As my pen will probably never again be actively employed, I leave this small volume as

PART I.

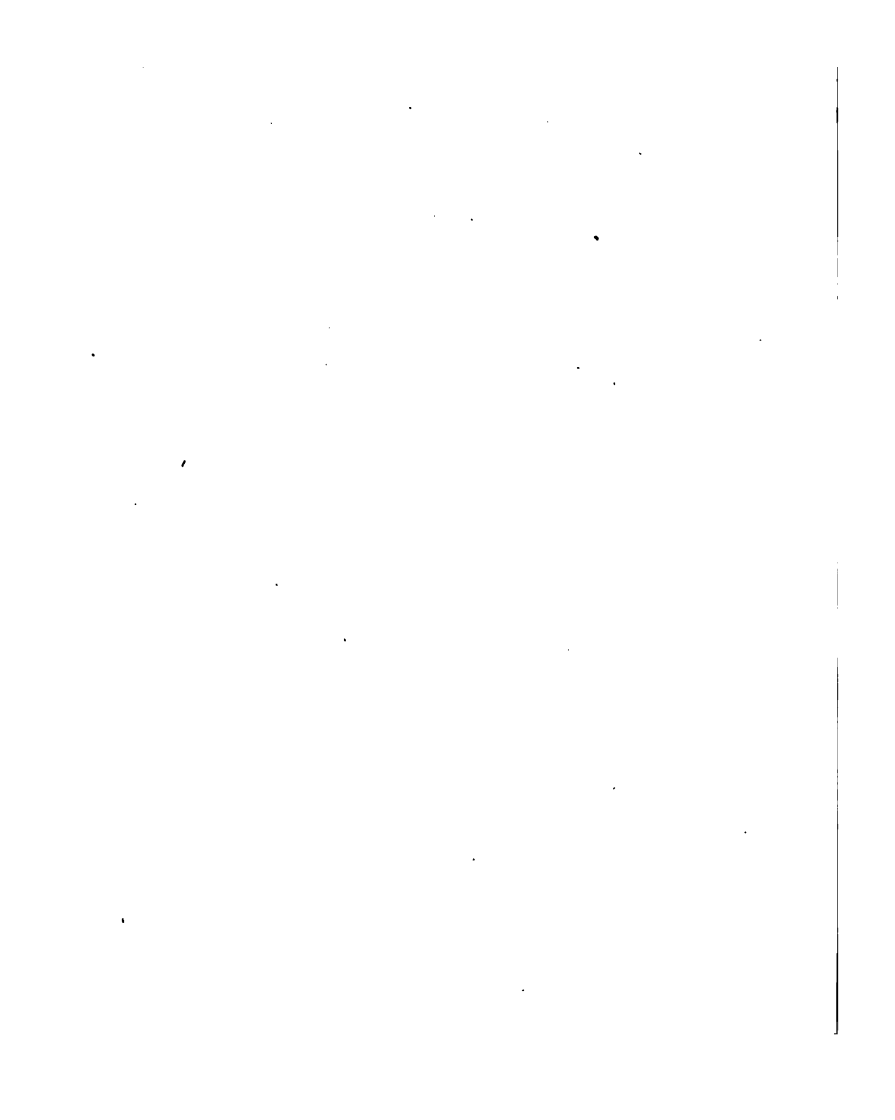
a parting remembrance to friends and acquaintances with my affectionate regards and best wishes for their happiness.

*O felice quel di, che, del terreno  
Carcere uscendo, lasci rotta e sparta  
Questa mia grave, e frale, e mortal gonna ;  
E da sì folte tenebre mi parta,  
Volando tanto su nel bel sereno,  
Ch' i' veggia il mio Signore, e la mia Donna !*

HIGHGATE, N.  
*January, 1881.*

PART II.

*ORIGINAL SONNETS.*



## I. INTRODUCTORY.

“And why these Sonnets?” reader! you inquire :  
Why waste the birds, sweet Jongleurs! time in song,  
And through the nights of May the day prolong,  
As Nature’s promptings move the feathered choir?

Their silly hearts are full of sacred fire,  
Which, bursting forth, each singer bears along ;  
Immortal verse is born of thoughts that throng  
The brain, when Bard must sing or else expire.

But birds and poets sing in their degree,  
And every bird is not a nightingale,  
Nor every poet worthy laureate crown.

My feeble linnet-notes still solace me,  
And Orpheus-like, they temper life’s rough gale  
With solo music sweet to me alone.

## PART II.

### II. SCIENCE.

If Science fail to catch the living sense  
Of Beauty which all Nature underlies,  
Science is vain, a casket less the prize ;  
Worthless our toil whate'er the recompense.

Life's mysteries surround us : tell us whence  
The germ expands in an organic guise ?  
What is that Life whose Protean forms surprise ?  
We know not e'en our own inheritance.

Yet Life is Beauty and consummate Grace ;  
An unknown something lurks in every flower,  
A mind beyond it and our own we trace :

A present, future, life-sustaining Power  
Speaks in each living thing, eye, gesture, face,  
Nor stays its mystic eloquence an hour.

• ORIGINAL SONNETS.

III. THE SENSE OF BEAUTY.

O cultivate thy sense of Beauty still,  
In youth or age, though kind or harsh thy fate ;  
Teach it to all around thee, early, late,  
And let it sway each impulse of the will :

See it in all around thee,—mountain, rill,  
Or flower or tree ; in low or lofty state ;  
Make it a living sense insatiate,  
And every thought with its own sweetness fill.

Then thou wilt seek in higher aims thy prize,  
And clothe thyself and all things else in light,  
The earth will be to thee a Paradise,

Thy future dress symbolic robes of white,  
In yonder clear serene, to which thou'lt rise  
When thou at length shalt soar beyond the night.

## PART II.

### IV. CULTURE.

Möge Jeder still beglückt  
Seiner Freuden warten !  
Wenn die Rose selbst sich schmückt,  
Schmückt sie auch den Garten.—RÜCKERT.

In every mind hath Nature cast her seed ;  
O tend it well ! and it will germinate,  
Will bud, and flower, and fruit ; and soon or late,  
Will yield rich harvest to repay thy heed.

It will supply thy every mental need ;  
Help thee to smile before the frowns of Fate ;  
And thy success will haply stimulate  
Thy friends, and thou'lt have joy if they succeed.

Well sang the German Poet that the rose,  
Herself adorning, makes the garden bright,—  
Such is the magic influence of Beauty !

Like influence is shed around by those  
Whose minds' adornments give to others light :  
Lov'st thou that light ? Self-culture is thy duty.

## ORIGINAL SONNETS.

### V. SCIENTIFIC SECTS.

Most men regard with wildering surprise  
Our curious subtleties, and reason thus:—  
“ If this be Science, it is not for us :  
Your tree of knowledge dead before us lies.

“ We want a living tree, with fruit to prize  
For life-sustaining flavour :—you discuss  
As if your theories were the Syllabus,  
And test their truth with ultramontane eyes.

“ Those who assent know scientific bliss ;  
Those who deny you excommunicate,  
Ye self-elected Priests of Nature's shrine !

“ We have no need of dogma such as this ;  
What gain we from your prejudice and hate ?  
We need to learn of Nature's laws divine.”

## PART II.

### VI. SCIENCE UNSECTARIAN.

Amidst the darkness of Philosophy,  
Lo ! Science lights her torch, our mental guide ;  
Disdaining systems, sects, thrusts them aside  
And gives to Nature all her fealty.

She, democratic in her sympathy,  
Disdains self-seeking, scientific pride,  
Not reputations, but results abide,  
To aid the progress of humanity.

The Critic does not teach the Poet art,  
Nor Chemist make the elements combine,  
The Astronomer gives not to Cosmos laws :

Nature alone performs this highest part,  
And they succeed who humbly seek her shrine  
For pregnant teaching, owning one First Cause.

ORIGINAL SONNETS.

VII. A RETURN SONNET

*Addressed to Dr. E. J. MILLS, F.R.S.,  
1st January, 1875.*

As one whose duty calls him to survey  
A blinding waste of snow, or lifeless sand,  
Self-disciplined, he others may command,  
And toil with them in patience through the day ;  
And with the night see splendours far away,  
Bright gems in many a constellated band,  
The Aurora's coruscations o'er the land,  
Which e'en the desert clothe in fair array :  
So mid the chaos rival theories make,  
Where Nature scared, conceals her wondering face,  
There's one whose heresy we must excuse ;  
Who upward lifts his eye for beauty's sake,  
Piercing dull Science through with living grace,  
He scorns the atoms but reveres the muse.

PART II.

VIII. MEN OF SCIENCE

*(Addressed to the Same).*

Grau, theurer Freund, ist alle Theorie  
Und grün des Leben's goldner Baum.—GÖTHE.

O Friend ! we men of science often fail  
To catch from Nature an inspiring light ;  
Systems may hide her grandeur from our sight,  
And sink her beauty 'neath minute detail.  
We lose her when hypotheses prevail ;  
Modes of vibration and the atom's flight,  
We take for what we cannot read aright,  
Mere guesses at the truths behind the veil.  
We know no science but in Nature's laws ;  
What lies beyond 'tis useless to explore ;  
Therefore 'twere wiser at the abyss to pause  
Nor seek with our frail means to bridge it o'er,  
Content to take the law in place of cause  
And own that mind can compass nothing more.

## ORIGINAL SONNETS.

### IX. NATURE.

Suchst du das Höchste, das Grösste? Die Pflanze kann es dich  
lehren :

Was sie wissenlos ist, sey du es wollend,—das ist's.

GÖTHE.

Nature requires of us unswerving trust ;  
'Gainst her relentless laws we strive in vain :  
As well oppose the brooklet to the main,  
Or to the levelling hurricane the dust.

Striving against the inevitable *must*,  
Brings on disease and its exponent pain ;  
Reflected in our race our sins remain,  
For she is unforgiving as she's just.

The unconscious plant may thus a lesson give :  
It buds, and flowers and fruits, bequeaths its seed  
As Nature dictates, clothing earth with beauty :

If consciously we thus as perfect live,  
Making obedience our highest duty,  
We here, hereafter, shall be blest indeed.

## PART II.

### X. TO XIX. SYSTEMS.

#### A CROWN OF SONNETS.

A number of consecutive sonnets on one theme is called by the Italians a *corona*, and they are generally arranged in the same metrical form, so as to produce a symmetrical crown for the head of the object or subject treated of. The ten systems here referred to are arranged under the following heads :—

1. Moses.
2. Plato.
3. Aristotle.
4. The Atomic.
5. Dante.
6. Copernicus.
7. Galileo.
8. Cuvier.
9. The Nebular.
10. Berkeley.

## ORIGINAL SONNETS.

### X. SYSTEMS.

#### I. MOSES.

The earth in formless chaos dwells with night,  
Until the quick'ning Spirit moves the flood,  
And Nature's harmony, first understood,  
Wakes to the awful voice, "Let there be light."

Dry land appears as seas are put to flight,  
Grass, herb, and fruit foretell the need of food ;  
Two lights in heaven record Time's changeful mood,  
And stars shine forth in constellations bright.

The waters bring forth life abundantly,  
Birds, beasts, and creeping things have the command,  
The earth replenishing, to overflow :

Obedient these : man could not understand  
His being's law : by his transgression he  
Bequeathed to us the legacy of woe.

## PART II.

### XI. SYSTEMS.

#### 2. PLATO (*died* B.C. 347).

Mistrust the senses, they do but deceive ;  
' Derive your knowledge solely through the mind ;  
Your mental intuitions truth will bind ;  
Not natural objects, but *ideas* believe.

Things wax and wane, no permanence achieve,  
Them heavy, light, or hot or cold we find ;  
But *primal* weight, heat, cold, all uncombined,  
These as eternal archetypes receive.

Ideas are so related that if one  
Be rightly grasped, it leads to all the rest,  
So potent is the mind all truth to win.

Fruit from this tree of knowledge there was none ;  
The world without not answering to his quest,  
He sought with more success the world within.

## ORIGINAL SONNETS.

### XII. SYSTEMS.

#### 3. ARISTOTLE (*died* B.C. 322).

No ! trust the senses ; each sensation's true ;  
    'Tis in the inference the danger lies ;  
Collect your facts, and by induction rise  
    To general truths, whence *causes* will ensue.

Seeking the *why*, the *how* escaped his view ;  
    The natural laws which make our Science wise,  
He missed in seeking causes to surprise,  
    Thus going astray though the right path he knew.

His syllogistic method, well conceived,  
    He failed its premises to verify ;  
Hence vain distinctions chiefly were the fruit ;

And in his teaching men so long believed,  
    That questioning him for truth, by his reply,  
Nature remained through twenty centuries mute.

## PART II.

### XIII. SYSTEMS.

#### 4. THE ATOMIC.

EPICURUS, *born* B.C. 342 ; LUCRETIUS, *born* B.C. 95.

Through the void of space the eternal atoms fly  
In three-fold paths, immeasurably fleet,  
Varied their forms, they oft colliding meet,  
Or, when uniting, matter comes thereby.

Earth, teeming life, heat, light, the starry sky,  
While still for them Time's mortal pulses beat,  
Atoms exhale, inhale, and so repeat  
This act of respiration till they die.

Atoms and space make up the cosmic whole ;  
The things they form have no abiding power,  
They vanish for ever in eternal death :

But their freed atoms other forms control,  
New planets, skies, and suns, and things with breath,  
Destroying, recreating evermore.

ORIGINAL SONNETS.

XIV. SYSTEMS.

5. DANTE, A.D. 1300.

Earth—centre of the universal whole—

The sun and other planets, globes of light,  
Revolve around her with a varied flight,  
And wingèd messengers their paths control.

Earth lodges Hell for the unrepentant soul :

Its circles passed, choose we our path aright,  
We come where decks the Southern Cross the night,  
Where Purgatory's mountain is the goal.

Within the spheres of air and fire it lies ;

Its spiral paths we painfully ascend  
And reach its crown, the Earthly Paradise :

Then through nine heavens our joyful way we wend

To the infinite, motionless Empyrean rise,  
Where Time had no beginning, knows no end.

## PART II.

### XV. SYSTEMS.

#### 6. COPERNICUS, 1507.

In Cosmos all is not as it appears ;  
Moving in space, Earth and the Planets all  
Pursue their paths round the fixed fiery ball,  
Earth equalled, far surpassed by other spheres.

He hid his theory six and thirty years  
Through dread of the Inquisitor, whose thrall  
Brings death to science and provides the pall  
Of superstition, spread by priestly fears.

Yon myriad points of light are each a sun ;  
How vast their distance none but God can tell ;  
Yet each must have its planets like our own :

Such heresy the Church's doctrine mars :  
Rome burnt his book, would have burnt him as well,  
But that his soul had risen to the stars.

ORIGINAL SONNETS.

XVI. SYSTEMS.

7. GALILEO, 1632.

O Galileo ! when thy tube revealed,  
Sweeping the expanse of the starry sky.  
What marvels ! unto thy astonished eye,  
Which from Creation's dawn had been concealed,

Thou, victim of Church laws, not yet repealed,  
Hadst to abjure and curse the heresy  
Of Nature's teachings which can never lie,  
Of laws which by Divinity are sealed.

Thou grand, old, sightless prisoner ! we take  
Thy wrongs as injuries received by us,  
Who prize the God-like heritage of mind :

And thus we judge for toleration's sake :—  
Thy foes, and ours who launched the Syllabus,  
Prove them, not thee, to be the truly blind.

## PART II.

### XVII. SYSTEMS.

#### 8. CUVIER.—1812.

Fertile the plains, the peaceful waters flow,  
And Nature smiles upon the busy scene,  
Unscathed, unless by senseless strife of men,  
Blest Paradise ! how blest if always so.

From many a fossil chronicle we know  
That Nature's kingdoms oft revolt have seen ;  
Myriads of living things entombed have been  
Amid the assaults of an intestine foe.

Dive deep in earth ; climb to the torrent's head,  
And read aright the quarried mountain's side,  
Or the smooth pebbles in the cultured field,

You'll see that land has oft been ocean's bed,  
As oft upheaved, as oft revived,  
While death and life the unceasing contest wield.

## ORIGINAL SONNETS.

### XVIII. SYSTEMS.

#### 9. THE NEBULAR THEORY.

Time's limits hamper not Infinity  
Which for one task flings off a million years :  
Spread out in space a nebula appears,  
The fervid womb of this earth's ancestry.

Vast clouds of vapour round its nucleus flee  
And rain upon it molten metal tears :  
Till, as it cools, its rigid surface bears  
Rocks, plains, the atmosphere, the restless sea.

Then comes mysterious Life in humblest form,  
Which slowly rises in organic strength  
To man, evolved from all and lord of all.

But earth still cools : its chasms will become  
The grave of air and ocean, and at length  
Be like our moon, a worn-out, lifeless ball.

## PART II.

### XIX. SYSTEMS.

#### 10. IDEALISM.

BERKELEY—1713.

There is no sound without the ear, no light  
Without the eye ; touch, taste, and smell  
On objects act, and these reacting, tell  
All that perception has of inner might.

What's seen we cannot separate from sight ;  
The thing's the semblance, semblance the thing  
as well :

We have no power the object to expel  
From the perception of it, dull or bright.

Matter has no existence but in mind ;  
The shows of things perceived, are those same things ;  
Knowing and Being convertible ideas.

These speculations useless do you find ?  
Who has them in his grasp more knowledge brings  
Of his own nature than the man who sneers.

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ORIGINAL SONNETS.

XX. THE POPULAR LECTURER.

The man of science, to the common mind  
Is like a conjuror, whose weakness lies  
In his attempt to explain each trick's surprise ;  
Success is seldom his the hearers find.

They quit his teaching thoughtless, unrefined,  
Since he not always, they but seldom wise,  
Small knowledge have of Nature's mysteries,  
Laws harsh to trespass, to obedience kind.

'Tis strange that Laws divine, omnipotent,  
Which bind us all in bonds we must obey,  
Would we from their self-acting pains be free,

Should have no bands of missionaries sent  
With living voice to teach all men the way,  
And in obedience highest good to see.

## PART II.

### XXI. A POPULAR LECTURE.

*(A Dialogue between two of the Audience.)*

- A. Lecture illogical ; illiterate  
The Lecturer ; the whole affair a grind.
- B. 'Tis true the Lecturer showed an untrained mind,  
But something, too, his faults to compensate.
- A. A clap-trap style and cant I know you hate  
Which caught an audience to logic blind.
- B. Nay ! but they caught his zeal ; you seldom find  
Young eager knowledge on induction wait.
- A. I grant his zeal ; his facts got up by cram,  
His leaps courageous o'er great gulfs of thought,  
His hearers, minus two, loud with applause.
- B. Then judge him kindly ; he is not a sham ;  
The boundless love of Nature that he taught  
May well excuse his ignorance of her laws.

ORIGINAL SONNETS.

XXII. THE TRUE PHILOSOPHER.

(“MICHAEL FARADAY. *Born September 22nd, 1791 ;  
Died August 25th, 1867.*”)

*Highgate Cemetery.*

In Nature's laws he sees a code Divine,  
A living Presence he must first adore,  
Ere he the sacred mysteries explore,  
Where Cosmos is his temple, Earth his shrine.  
O'erwhelmed by proofs of infinite design,  
He strives, though weak of wing, on high to soar,  
If small his strength, he humbly asks for more,  
“Not mine, O God!” he says, “the glory Thine.”  
O Mind! of Nature taught, thy patient skill,  
Concentred study which we genius name,  
Upheld by prayerful faith in things unseen,  
Make the ground fruitful which thou'rt called to till ;  
Meek Labourer! unconscious of thy fame,  
Thou reap'st a harvest where we only glean.

## PART II.

### XXIII. OXYGEN.—1774.

When Priestley, he of Chemistry the guide,  
Found what he rightly named "the Vital Air,"  
Life- fire-sustaining ; how, with subtle care  
Green leaves the air that's spoiled revived,

Science rejoiced : the world could not decide  
What pregnant teaching was embodied there,  
What hygienic laws stood out more clear,  
For harder 'tis to profit than deride.

A hundred years ! Men learn not much of time  
Unless discovery add to added wealth :  
We build our homes as they were built of yore :

Our crowded alleys breed disease and crime,  
And few are taught this warning rule of health,  
That air once breathed, is poison breathed twice o'er.

## ORIGINAL SONNETS.

### XXIV. FORCES.

Phenomena in groups we classify,  
And o'er each group we make a force preside,  
Which moves, arrests the motion, turns it aside : —  
How vain to define a mighty mystery !

If gravitation rule the earth and sky,  
Polarity in chemic changes hide,  
Vital and psychic force in us abide,  
And force electric bid the lightnings fly ;

'Tis only when we exercise our will  
To make the will an action, that we know  
What means a force, for in us lies the cause :

Phenomena to themselves no causes show ;  
But forces serve His purpose to fulfil  
Who made them ministers of Nature's laws.

## PART II.

### XXV. THE TWO BOOKS.

If from the pastor's care the sheep ne'er stray  
But still remain obedient in the fold,  
The wisdom of two books they must be told,  
In both be taught the strait and narrow way :

Be taught for spiritual aid to pray,  
For living truths the Bible has enrolled ;  
But Nature's book like truths for us doth hold :  
That both contain God's will who can gainsay ?

O teach them how divine His written laws  
And those we read in Nature ; what their power ;  
How each code deals rewards and penalties :

Warn them that they before transgression pause ;  
That to obedience how rich the dower ;  
Aid them to culture and pure life to rise.

ORIGINAL SONNETS.

XXVI. ANNIHILATION.

“ If Death annihilate ”—so some men say,  
“ Nature will still go on, as potent be.”  
Where is the proof? ’Tis by perception’s key  
That we in this dark world unlock our way.

Conceive annihilation as you may,  
Perception of *not being* still you see ;  
If but a fragment from Oblivion’s sea  
Escape the wreck, imperfect is her sway.

If mind and matter we must correlate,  
And matter is indestructible, then mind  
Immortal is, beyond the reach of doubt :

If in this proposition truth we find,  
How then can men not dread a future state,  
Make guests of other dreads, that dread shut out ?

## PART II.

### XXVII. HOWARD.—1789.

The merciful are blest and mercy find  
From Him who ruled the waves and taught the poor,  
Who to our sufferings opened Pity's door  
And urged our callous natures to be kind.

He blest the pure in heart, the lowly mind,  
Taught Charity to give not less but more,  
Taught us the God of Mercy to implore,  
Not for ourselves alone, but all mankind.

'Tis little each can do, but he does well  
Who wrestles with one form of human wrong,  
Nor rests until that wrong becomes the right.

Thus Howard found his mission in the cell  
Of prisoned woe, unjudged, though suffering long,  
Cleansed the foul dungeon and let in God's light.

## ORIGINAL SONNETS.

### XXVIII. CHARITY.

If a good man who differs from my creed  
Is doomed to suffer everlasting woe,  
And I am taught to hate him as a foe,  
And deem but splendid vice his splendid deed ;

If he stretch out his hand to desperate need,  
And secretly his prayers and aid bestow,  
Striving to make his fellows Christ-like grow,  
And the stray sheep into His pasture lead ;

My creed is vain, his charity divine,  
And on the last great day will lead to heaven,  
Faith, alms, and knowledge not in this decree :—

“Come ! blessed of my Father, you are mine !”  
Nor Church nor Creed as motive will be given,  
But, “Sick and in prison and you visited me.”

PART II.

XXIX. OF THE EARTH, EARTHY.

Ἐκ γῆς χοῖκός. 1 Cor. 15—47.

Howe'er Imagination plume her wings  
To lofty flight, she yet to earth is bound,  
Nor can escape from touch, taste, sight, and sound,  
Nor fail to sympathise with mundane things.

Whatever aid the mental vision brings  
To raise the soul to Heaven, 'tis compassed round  
With our corruption : discord still is found  
In the sublimest song the poet sings.

If groping in an atmosphere of sense  
For things divine is sure to miss its aim,  
Where shall we be after our latest breath?

Lost in the Infinite? or dare we claim  
Mid yonder spheres a bright inheritance  
When Death has conquered, or we've conquered  
Death?

## ORIGINAL SONNETS.

### XXX. THE PAST.

When I behold the landscape of the past,  
And see regrets, how vain ! before me go  
In solemn progress, lingering, sad and slow,  
And life's best purposes in shadows haste,

Loved forms, and one most loved, seen, vanished fast,  
Like morning mist before the rising glow,  
Then "Memory !" I ask, " art friend or foe,  
That ills remain and good doth never last ? "

Conscience, stern moraliser, crushes me  
With potent logic : " Life was all thine own  
To fritter time away, or use for gain :

Thou'st reaped as thou hast sown ; the harvest see !  
Repine not now thy course is nearly run,  
That weeds grow weeds and not the generous grain."

## PART II.

### XXXI. AFTER THOUGHTS.

I print a book, I lecture, make a speech,  
Or to opponents readily reply ;  
After reflection crushes forth a sigh,—  
“The best points missed, alas ! though in my reach.”

Our best work lies in what we fail to teach ;  
Our powers oft in the potential lie ;  
Best purposes precede us till we die ;  
We ne'er o'ertake them nor their aid beseech.

If we possess high aims, but lack the power  
To make the will the deed, and others come  
And do our work, God's purpose still remains ;

All tends to progress ; though our little hour  
We lost, this cannot be our final home  
Where mind's defects but crown the body's pains.

ORIGINAL SONNETS.

XXXII. PROGRESS.

Weit in unentdeckte Fernen  
Breiten Klarheit die Gedanken ;  
Doch das Nächste zu vollenden,  
Fühl' ich meine Hand erkranken.

A. W. v. SCHLEGEL.

Each noble purpose oft in distance lies,  
And we pursue not ; all our powers for good  
We conjugate in the potential mood,  
And rest while Progress takes us by surprise :  
For here and there is one with keener eyes  
Who our temptations with man's strength withstood ;  
Who says " I *do* the work !" not *might, could, should* ;  
Who proves the truth which fondly we surmise.  
If unaccomplished then our work remain,  
And one by one we fall at Death's command  
The worn-out links of an extended chain ;  
If where we stood new links more strongly stand,  
Still may we hope some higher state to gain  
Where Progress will give strength to brain and hand.

## PART II.

### XXXIII. THE IDEAL.

The executed music is sublime ;  
    Sublimar thoughts stirred the composer's mind :  
The poem loftily inspired you find ;  
The poet's lyre was tuned to loftier rhyme.

That painting shows us Nature's loveliest clime ;  
    The artist fancied something more refined :  
These all their own ideal lag behind,  
And to o'ertake it all too short is time.

If we must fail before the perfect thought,  
    The goal advancing while we still pursue,  
And death o'ertake us ere we reach our aim,

Why by some yearning instinct are we taught  
    To hold perfection ever in our view,  
Unless some future state make good our claim ?

ORIGINAL SONNETS.

XXXIV. SURSUM CORDA.

*"La Vida es Sueño."*—CALDERON.

If I unskilful navigate Life's sea,  
Beset with many a hidden rock around,  
And my poor compass be unfaithful found,  
And trembling, point the rock of Doubt to me,  
What power shall guide me and at length set free  
From the dread outer tempests that resound,  
From Mind's mute strife, by which I'm held storm-  
bound  
'Neath skies all black with threatened destiny?  
One rock at least there is with friendly light,  
To which I timidly look up and plead  
For strength, though intermittent be its beam :  
That light is lit by faith, now dim, now bright,  
In the unseen, unknown, by which I read :  
"Look out beyond—this life is but a dream !"

## PART II.

### XXXV. DARK QUESTIONS.

Insolubly hard questions may appear  
Not worth the talk : men dogma take, or text,  
Problems to solve for this world and the next,  
And feel impatient if the thing's not clear.

From Matter, Mind, Perception, wide they steer,  
With Evil's origin will not be vexed,  
Free-will, Necessity, give no pretext ;  
Nor if the Spirit world be far or near.

Such questions are the rocks of Life's dark sea,  
And mightily obstruct the inner mind,  
Which feels an awful, mightier mind without :

Who thinks to navigate a passage free,  
On Apathy's dull shore will danger find ;  
Better be wrecked upon the rock of Doubt.

ORIGINAL SONNETS.

XXXVI. TRUTH AND COMMON SENSE.

Truth's standard gold we grudgingly dispense,  
Unless alloyed with prejudice or hate ;  
We proffer toll, base metal, at her gate,  
And wonder that we cannot pass on thence.

She hides her face from passion and pretence,  
Smiles when pure motives humbly on her wait ;  
E'en lack of genius she can compensate,—  
Coy Knowledge yields to artless Common Sense.

Twin Sisters, Common Sense is in the van  
Of steady progress ; by her aid we find  
The other Sister, never far away :

She nicely regulates the inner man,  
Maintains just balance 'mong the powers of mind,  
And aids the other Sister's healthful sway.

## PART II.

### XXXVII. A CONTRAST.

He toils all day ; all day you pleasure seek ;  
He strives to obey the laws of mind and health ;  
You, slavish, serve that fatal master, Wealth ;  
The results, though tongueless, eloquently speak.

He bright of intellect, through culture meek,  
Is strong and useful in the commonwealth ;  
You jaded, mark not how old age by stealth  
Creeps prematurely, weakening what is weak.

Thus like her noiseless forces all around,  
Rain, dew, disintegrating frost and air,  
Air-breathing leaves, fulfilling all their duty,

Nature with sleepless eye is ever found  
Guiding the ills the lawless have to bear,  
Crowning obedience with health and beauty.

ORIGINAL SONNETS.

XXXVIII. SUCCESS.

Most men are wooers of bright-eyed Success,  
Who fail lack genius, or dislike the pains ;  
Wealth, rank, fame, conquest, love, are reckoned  
    gains  
In which they fondly place their happiness.

One wins by luck of Fortune's blindest guess ;  
Most win, if win they do, in servile chains ;  
They train life's prime away, and what remains  
Though they succeed, is often emptiness.

He best succeeds whose body, mind, and soul  
Find highest good in clear-eyed Culture meek,  
And tolerant views with kindly manners blent ;

Who owns to imperfections which his goal  
Owns not : what in life's sea has he to seek  
Whose good ship bears the figure-head CONTENT ?

## PART II.

### XXXIX. FAILURE.

The sense of failure is a mighty weight  
That crushes out all gladness ; fills the mind  
With gloomy thoughts ; its conscious victims find  
Writ in men's faces, Nature's face, defeat.

Why do men fail ? they're not the sport of Fate,  
But to their own capacities are blind,  
Or lack the training, or they lag behind,  
Seize not an opportunity, but wait.

But failure may be blest to those who heed  
Its bitter lessons ; though they lose the game,  
The rank, distinction, glory, or the pelf ;

They fail not if they learn how much they need,  
Striving for that which has more worth than fame,  
That last best knowledge, knowledge of one's self.

## ORIGINAL SONNETS.

### XL. TO XLII. THREE SONNETS,

*Written at the Camp on Worle Hill.*

WORLE HILL is an insulated ridge of mountain limestone, situated to the north of the town of Weston-super-Mare, on the banks of the Bristol Channel, in Somersetshire. The extremity of this ridge appears to have been originally fortified with ditches, walls, and perhaps other elevations of dry masonry, which, having fallen down, now form mounds of loose stones. The area of the camp is dotted over with upwards of 200 circular cavities, each from six to eight feet in diameter ; many of them are in parallel lines, and may mark the sites of ancient huts. They are now filled up with masses of stone, which once may have formed a circular wall to each, and they were probably wattled over with basket-work or straw. Many years ago some of these cavities were opened, and a few of them were found to contain human

## PART II.

skeletons; a considerable quantity of wheat and barley, blackened as if by fire; decayed wood; horses' teeth; bones, either of the rabbit or of some large bird; rounded pebbles, evidently from the beach below, and probably used as sling-stones by the occupiers of the camp; two iron javelin or spear heads; remains of plaited straw-work, and numerous fragments of sun-baked pottery. This last discovery, coupled with the absence of Roman remains, indicates the great antiquity of this camp. The theory is, that the camp was taken by surprise and destroyed by fire. One of the skeletons is that of a man of almost gigantic size, and the conformation of the skull resembles that of the savage type of head. The skull and other portions of the skeleton bear marks of the fierce conflict which seems to have ended in the destruction of the camp: the skull is completely cleft through in more than one place.

The Flat-Holme lighthouse is seen from the encampment.

ORIGINAL SONNETS.

XL. THE CAMP ON WORLE HILL.

ANCIENT.

The rude encampment frowns upon the foe ;  
A fortress-home by skin-clad warriors manned,  
Prepared with sling and stone, or lance in hand,  
And ponderous rock, well-poised, to hurl below.

A savage host deploys around them now,  
Now like a storm-cloud bursts upon the band,  
Yell meeting yell, besieged 'gainst besiegers stand,  
And death responds to every well-timed blow.

The camp is taken, its defenders slain,  
The mothers' and the children's blood is shed.  
And fired the wattled huts and stores of grain :

Their work complete, the storm of men is fled,  
Its triumph's thunder echoing to the main,  
And the pale stars shine out upon the dead.

## PART II.

### XLI. THE CAMP ON WORLE HILL.

#### MODERN.

The old encampment smiles upon the sea ;  
Time's healing hand hath left not e'en a trace  
Of man's pollution, but hath decked that face  
Of rock with thymy turf and flower and tree.

Much older are those bones than History ;  
Yet these poor sun-baked vessels formed a place  
For some rude artist's hand to touch with grace,—  
Mute relics of our common ancestry.

The distant Pharos sheds its warning light ;  
Ships full of latent thunder seem to dispel  
Our hope in that blest promise, "Wars shall cease ;"

The old Church tower makes musical the night,  
The pallid stars still shine, as if to tell  
That in some Heaven above we look for peace.

ORIGINAL SONNETS.

XLII. THE CAMP ON WORLE HILL.

THE NIGHT-JAR.

Mysterious bird ! in a mysterious place,  
What time the evening dew is on the sward,  
And to deep nooks the glow-worm lends a grace,  
Thy rapid jarring note is often heard :

Moving on noiseless wing, I cannot trace  
Thy flight ; what art thou, solitary bird ?  
The beetle drones ; each creature to its race  
Gives meaning touch or sound in place of word :

The night winds sigh : each thing hath its own sound  
And words and sounds blend into Nature's voice  
Which inarticulate in the heart we feel :

We know that in their being all rejoice ;  
Mysterious life is in us, all around,  
But what it is, mind, tongue, cannot reveal.

## PART II.

### XLIII. THE MOUNTAIN TORRENT.

Swift Torrent ! from the rock's womb thou issuest free,  
In bounding leaps, foam-decked, as white as snow,  
Heedless that toil awaits thee down below,  
And further on thy grave the thirsty sea.

Harnessed to many a mill-wheel thou wilt be,  
Boat, barge and sail on thee will come and go,  
And verdant banks to thee their verdure owe,  
And living creatures find their home in thee..

But thou immortal from the engulfing wave  
On wings of air again wilt joyous rise,  
Descend in rain and find thy mountain cave :

When my poor work is done, shall I arise  
From Death's dark sea, and subtle influence have  
To waft me upwards to the living skies ?

ORIGINAL SONNETS.

XLIV. TO AN ACTRESS.

If thou canst act so well the faithful Wife,  
The loving Mother and the constant Friend,  
Thy sweetness with home's daily routine blend,  
And dignify the common cares of life ;

If thou, fair Artist ! with true instinct rife,  
Thy audience mak'st to nobler aims ascend,  
Mak'st woman more to woman's virtues tend,  
And man, in thought, to wish for such a wife ;

Say ! canst thou thy creation realise,  
And what thou seemest canst thou really be,  
The living thing thy art doth but portray ?

If not, thou'st given a glimpse of Paradise,  
Which, like the perfect things in dreams we see,  
Mocks the reality and fades away.

PART II.

XLV. LEAP-YEAR.

A CAUDATED SONNET.

As playmates we together fondly grew,  
A boy and girl, nor heeded how time fled  
Till Love joined company, though he nothing said ;  
I thought she loved me ; that I loved she knew.  
An Heiress, she had suitors not a few ;  
A Student, all my fortune was my head ;  
I knew wealth scorned with poverty to wed,  
And I, a poor man, to my pride was true.  
The house was full of guests ; a note was brought :—  
"To-morrow to the wedding breakfast come."  
It was her hand, death-warrant unto me.  
But vanished soon the anguish of my thought,  
When she before the rest had hurried home  
And said, "A bridesmaid, not a bride, you see !  
" 'Tis leap-year, gentle Friend !  
I need not blush to bend  
And say, Wilt thou be mine ?"  
Unspeakable the bliss  
Unfolded in the "Yes !"  
Which said "I'm thine !"

<sup>1</sup> The incident in this sonnet was suggested by a tale in *Blackwood's Magazine*.

ORIGINAL SONNETS.

XLVI. A SURPRISE.

As Stripling I loved thee a little Maid,  
Ah me, how long ago ! I see thee now  
A lovely Woman with a smiling brow,  
Thy hair arranged in many a witching braid.

Roses thy cheeks, of pearls thy teeth are made,  
Thy lip is the model for young Cupid's bow ;  
Time's dial must be many years too slow,  
Backward his flight, scythe blunted, tooth decayed.

I'm old and grey ; o'er me the rolling years  
Have worked their mischief, but not left me wise ;  
They've dulled the sense of beauty in my heart :

But thy young form renews love's hopes and fears ;  
I feel again the influence of thine eyes ;—  
Say ! is it nature or consummate art ?

PART II.

XLVII. CHRISTMAS CARDS.

TO L. T. S.

I lightly prize the sentiment we buy  
As lacking friendship in its noblest part,  
The unbought affection of a loving heart,  
The eye made eloquent by sympathy.

In custom we may find the reason why  
We deal out samples of mechanic art,  
And Christmas, New Year's cards to friends impart,  
And as we give, like getting we imply.

But your sweet verses, Lucy, inly wrought  
In your own thoughtful brain's recess, remove  
Your gift from commonplace to loftier end :

May this as New Year's gift to you be brought—  
The Christ-like sympathy—the greater love,  
That sacrifices self to serve a friend.

ORIGINAL SONNETS.

XLVIII.

TO H. F. L.

The line in thy sweet sonnet, sweetest Friend !  
    “ ‘ All things to all men, ’ yet to all sincere, ”  
    Brings to my mind thyself, in radiance clear,  
    And the soft graces which with culture blend.

Instead of Christmas card a prayer I send  
    For blessings on the art we hold so dear,  
    So that our present buds bring fruit next year,  
    While we the flowers with loving duty tend.

Well sang the Poet : “ If thou’rt not the Rose,  
    ’Tis plain that her companion thou hast been, ]  
    Since thou her fragrance dost so well retain.”

So, when the Muse thee as companion chose,  
    She tuned thy lyre to melodies serene,  
    Making her truth and goodness prompt thy strain.

## PART II.

### XLIX. SUBJECTIVE.

A ray of sunshine in a gloomy room,  
Its function takes from the observer's mind ;  
If cheerful, he will gladness in it find ;  
If gloomy, it will add to present gloom.

Our joys and sorrows are all reared at home,  
In the mind's curious workshop wrought, refined,  
And all external things with them combined,  
In joy or sadness back reflected come.

In thy sweet face, dear Lady ! oft I read  
My varying moods 'twixt cheerfulness and fear,  
And yet thy constant sunshine never sêts :

In joy thy smiles like golden light appear ;  
But Grief, dull Alchemist ! turns gold to lead,  
As arctic night the quickening sun forgets.

## ORIGINAL SONNETS.

### L. CLARENDON WOOD.

'Tis early Easter-tide ; before me lies  
A copse ; the linnet has not built his nest,  
But there the primrose in her yellow vest  
Smiles out in myriads before my eyes.

I almost weep for gladdening surprise  
That so much fragrant beauty, richly drest,  
Should in its lovely solitude find rest,  
Nor deem man's admiration worthy prize.

O Heart and Brain ! o'erwearied with the strife  
Of life's hard battle, each to each a foe,  
Not comrades all striving for nobler life,

Forgive ! if I a moment's weakness show,  
And yearn that here might cease my secret grief  
And the pale primrose o'er me softly grow.

PART II.

LI. TO THE REV. R. FLETCHER, M.A.

*One of the Masters of the Cholmeley School, Highgate.*

**In Memoriam.**

*20th November, 1873.*

We buried him on this autumnal day  
Beneath a sky half cloudy and half blue ;  
While fitfully the sunshine's golden ray  
Gave Autumn's remnant a serener hue.  
Such was his life : he cloudless skies ne'er knew ;  
A partly blooming, partly withered spray  
He yet shed sweetness all around, and grew  
More like to Him in whose dear name we pray.  
Thou patient child of suffering, farewell !  
No more may we thy voice melodious hear ;  
Thou'rt gone the heavenly choruses to swell  
And 'mong the white-robed saints thy part to bear :  
May we, like thee, our tasks fulfil as well  
That so we join thee in the heavenly choir.

ORIGINAL SONNETS.

LII. THE DISEMBODIED SPIRIT.

It cannot be that death dissolves for ever  
The bond that forms the friendship of a life,  
Or the sweet tie 'twixt Husband and his Wife,  
Parent and Child, when soul and body sever.

Surely the parted spirit must endeavour  
To give some secret aid amidst the strife  
Bereavement brings, when saddest thoughts are rife,  
And Faith, grown weak, answers our prayers with  
"Never!"

All things below seem to renew their youth,  
Spring rescues Nature from her wintry doom,  
Minds fed by former minds advance in truth :

Shall man alone, withered in death's simoom,  
Not know new life, gift of his Maker's ruth,  
Not welcome dear ones in a happier home?

PART II.

LIII. THE DREAM.<sup>1</sup>

18th June, 1873.

ANNIVERSARY OF OUR WEDDING.

On wings of thought upborne to heaven I fly,  
For where my treasure is, my heart is there,  
Despising every earthly tie and care,  
I reach my goal, than highest stars more high ;  
See the loved form, the smile, the tender eye,  
And hear the sweet voice thus in accents clear ; —  
“ O my beloved ! how could'st thou enter here  
“ Ere thou thy fleshly covering had'st thrown by ?  
“ But come thou to the Master ! ” When I came  
I fell upon my face and humbly prayed :—  
“ O Saviour ! let me stay with her and Thee ! ”  
He spake :—“ Who leaves his work undone I blame :  
“ Did I on earth my duty seek to evade ?  
“ Repine not, but depart from her and me ! ”

<sup>1</sup> Suggested by Petrarch's Sonnet CCCX. *Volo con l' ali, &c.*

ORIGINAL SONNETS.

LIV. THE REALITY.

*17th October, 1873.*

ANNIVERSARY OF HER DEATH.

A year has fled since thy great load of pain  
Was shaken off, inheritance to me :—  
I seek thy grave beneath the young oak tree,  
Burnished with autumn's gold, and long remain

With yearning strange, from which I nothing gain  
But heavier weight of sorrow ; nothing see  
Save the vain words that tell thou'st ceased to be,  
And hopeless, feel 'twere folly to complain.

In vain I strive, in thought, to cross the abyss  
To yonder land where thou art clothed in light,  
Midst kindred Spirits happy, pure, and glad ;

Dark, mute thy grave : the future is like to this ;  
I grope like one unled, deprived of sight,  
But still advance to saddest from the sad.

## PART II.

### LV. DOUBTS AND FEARS.

#### I.

Where sped her Soul when she departed hence,  
And ne'er returned ; or if she came, unknown,  
In the dull hours of thought of her alone,  
When sign of her were Sorrow's recompence ?

May be that her fine sense to my gross sense  
Cannot communicate, nor haply own  
A spirit to the body still chained down  
That finds not where is highest good, nor whence.

Her love was such that had she but the power  
To soothe my troubled mind, I know she'd come ;  
Her nature was to cheer the disconsolate :

But the dark present sometimes brings an hour  
Of peace, foreshadowing a future home,  
When gentle Patience fondly whispers " Wait ! "

ORIGINAL SONNETS.

LVI. DOUBTS AND FEARS.

2.

My Sara ! though thou'rt dead I call thee mine :  
Can'st thou forget our three-and-thirty years ?  
If Spirit left thee, Spirit ne'er appears ;  
I saw life, breath depart, nought else of thine.

I watched thy corpse as Saint ne'er watched the shrine,  
And saw thee strangely altered through my tears,  
Thyself not there. What is it disappears  
With life ? And what is death ? How life define ?

Where art thou now ? And dost thou love me still ?  
Or has thy Spirit pierced me through and through  
And found at length how weak I am and frail ?

Thou see'st me earth-bound and of feeble will ;  
And knowing of many sins I only knew,  
Thy heavenly love o'er earthly must prevail.

## PART II.

### LVII. INNOCENTS' DAY.

#### HER BIRTHDAY.

O my beloved Sara ! on this day,  
During the long years of our wedded life,  
A birthday gift from Husband unto Wife  
Was wont to mark our journey on life's way.

I lonely wait in mood 'twixt grave and gay,  
Nor wage with sorrow an unequal strife,  
Since Time has dulled the sharper edge of grief;  
Yet for reunion earnestly I pray.

Our home is the same—its every room the same  
As when thy presence gave it love and light,  
And each familiar thing to me is dear ;

I often fancy thou dost call my name,  
And in the solemn watches of the night  
Some subtle influence warns me thou art near.

## ORIGINAL SONNETS.

### LVIII. NEW YEAR'S DAY.

The earth is clad in white ; the sullen wind  
Howls at my casement, in the distance howls ;  
Time from his scroll another year unfurls  
While Memory lingers midst the years behind ;

Brings back the loving smile, the candid mind,  
The winning mien, the sympathy of souls,  
That force of goodness which by love controls  
And teaches e'en the selfish to be kind.

I seek her grave, but that is not her rest ;  
'Tis vain to seek the living 'mongst the dead ;  
But I am frail of body, sin-opprest,

And lack the wings to fly where she is fled,  
To the bright regions of the spirits blest :—  
Peace, weary heart ! Hope flies for thee instead.

PART II.

LIX. LABORARE EST ORARE.

Dear Friends and dearest Wife are gone before,  
Death winging them o'er his mysterious sea ;  
Only in memory come they back to me,  
A lonely wanderer on that silent shore.

But Poesy employs me as of yore,  
And Science, coy as she is wont to be,  
Lures me perchance by search to find the key  
To unlock the mysteries I now explore.

Though hard the service, it is full of charm,  
For e'en their frown excites to nobler life,  
But oh ! how rich the blessing of their smile :

If ye behold me from yon region calm,  
Ye'll say, dear Friends, and thou'lt approve, dear  
Wife,  
That toil, not tears, can best my grief beguile.

PART III.

*SONNETS FROM PETRARCH.*



### III. SONNETS FROM PETRARCH.

These translations (some of which have already appeared in my book on the Sonnet), are intended to illustrate the variety that belongs to Petrarch's method. While being strictly legitimate as to form, he manages with singular ease and fertility of illustration, to work out the purpose of the sonnet—namely, to develop a single thought logically yet poetically. The reader who is interested in the welfare of the sonnet is recommended to study Petrarch in the original. The matchless style of his melody can be but faintly, if at all, represented on a foreign instrument.

In the Appendix to my book on the Sonnet is an essay "On the Identification of Laura," in which a variety of arguments chiefly drawn from the writings of Petrarch himself, are brought forward in support of the opinion that Laura was never married. Some of the sonnets in the following pages are also in favour of this thesis.

PART III.

SONNET XXVII.

*Apollo, s'ancor vive il bel desio.*

Apollo ! if the sweet desire still live,  
Which once assailed thee near the Thessalian wave,  
If the bright tresses which such pleasures gave  
Still in thy thought midst rolling years survive,

This honoured, sacred Tree thy succour give :  
It claimed thy love 'ere I became its slave ;  
Save it from sluggish frost, from tempests save,  
Which while thou hidest thy face, together strive.

By the fond memory of the amorous plight  
In which her coldness made thee sigh in vain,  
From every evil influence clear the air :

That marvel then may gratify our sight,  
Our Lady seated in the verdant plain,  
Her own arm's shade her own protection there.

## PETRARCA.

The older commentators (see *Gesualdo*, 1541, p. 52), relate that the poet having in honour of Laura planted a laurel by the side of the rivulet Lumergue, close to her birthplace at Cabrières, and fearing lest it might be blighted by the inclement season, calls upon Apollo (the sun-god) to protect it. He reminds him of the time when, deprived of his divinity and banished from heaven, he found a refuge at the court of Admetus, King of Thessaly, and that wandering one day by the river Peneus, he encountered and pursued Daphne, a nymph of the river, who chose rather to be changed into a laurel than yield to him (Ovid, *Mét.* i. Fab. 10). The poet prays Apollo, to whom the tree is sacred, to defend it, and also as the god of medicine to restore Laura to health, so that she may again appear and they may once more behold her seated under the shade of their favourite tree.

An example of the skill with which the poet selects his adjectives, may be noticed in the second quatrain, *pigro gelo*, "the sluggish frost"; adopting the expressive term of Horace, *Bruma recurrit iners*. Macgregor, in his translation of this sonnet, has "the long frost," which is to be insensible to a poetical beauty.

PART III.

SONNET XLVII.

*Benedetto sia 'l giorno e 'l mese, e 'l anno.*

O blessed be the day, the month, the year,  
The season, time, the moment of the hour,  
And the sweet spot where I first felt the power  
Of two bright eyes which held me captive there.

And blessed be the first enthralling fear  
That seized my heart when Love had bound me sure ;  
Blessed the bow and arrows that he bore  
And the deep wounds which in my breast I bear.

And blessed too be every vocal strain  
I've spread around invoking her loved name,  
The sighs, the tears, desires, their burden's pain :

And blessed be the rhymes that made her fame,  
And every thought of my poetic vein,  
Which she alone, none else, has power to claim.

PETRARCA.

SONNET LX.

*Io son sì stanco sotto 'l fascio antico.*

I feel all weary 'neath the accustomed weight  
Of my old sins, and habits formed of sin ;  
And fear lest fainting on the road I'm in,  
I fall a victim to the power I hate.

Time was a mighty Friend compassionate,  
To rescue me came of His grace benign,  
And then departed ; and I cannot win  
Another look, although I longing, wait.

But yet I hear his words, all steeped in love ;  
“ All ye that labour, see ! the road is here,  
That leads to me, then heed no other quest.”

What grace, or love, or fate will grant this prayer—  
“ And oh, that I had pinions like a dove !  
For then I'd fly away and be at rest.”

PART III.

SONNET LXIX.

*Erano i capei d' oro a l'aura sparsi.*

Her golden hair was streaming in the wind,  
Which sweetly twisted it a thousand ways ;  
And in those eyes unutterable gaze,  
Flashed a bright light, which now is dimmed, I find.

Her face, for me, expressed a loving mind,  
(Did truth or self-deceit that fancy raise ?)  
What marvel that my heart was soon a-blaze,  
Love finding food for fire, to Love consigned !

Her walk was not the step of mortal thing,  
But of angelic form ; her accents clear  
Had in their music more than human sound :

A heavenly Spirit did I see and hear,  
A living Sun ; and if such charms take wing,  
The slackening of the bow heals not the wound.

PETRARCA.

SONNET LXXVIII.

*Poi che voi ed io più volte abbiam provato.*

Since you and I, my Friend ! so often find  
Our flattering hopes turn out fallacious here,  
Let us uplift our hearts to a happier sphere,  
To highest Good that ne'er deceives the mind.

This life is like a meadow where doth wind,  
Mid grass and flowers, the serpent, ever near ;  
Who loves to gaze soon gets enamoured there  
And feels his power in slavery to bind.

Seek'st thou to have thy mind for aye at rest,  
'Ere dawns upon the world the last dread day,  
Thou'lt shun the crowd and seek the few who are  
blest ;

“ Brother ! ” (thou well indeed to me can'st say,)  
“ Thou'st shown to others oft the road thou'st  
missed,  
From which thou'rt more than ever gone astray.”

PART III.

SONNET CXXVI.

*In qual parte del Ciel, in qual idea.*

Say in what part of heaven, in what ideal,  
Of that fair face did Nature find the mould?  
As if therein she here below had told  
How much up there she could perform at will.

What fountain nymph to the breeze could e'er reveal,  
Or sylvan goddess, such bright locks of gold?  
What heart so many virtues can unfold?  
Though all are guilty of the death I feel.

He vainly strives on charms divine to gaze,  
Who never gazed upon those lovely eyes,  
How their sweet turning every soul beguiles ;

He knows not how love heals, nor how love slays,  
Who knows not how she sweetly, sweetly sighs,  
Nor how she sweetly speaks, and sweetly smiles.

PETRARCA.

SONNET CXXX.

*Amor, che vedi ogni pensiero aperto.*

O Love ! that seest every thought of mine,  
And the hard ways o'er which thou mak'st me go,  
Thy eyes pierce through and through my heart, and  
know

All that is there, known to no eyes but thine.

Thou know'st in following thee how much I pine,  
And thou from hill to hill goest lightly so  
Each day, nor thought on me dost thou bestow,  
Me weary, and thy path is too steep to join.

'Tis true that I from far the sweet light see,  
Which o'er rough ways still spurs me, wandering on,  
But I have not like thee the wings to fly ;

Somewhat contented might my wishes be,  
Although my chaste desires consume me soon  
Were she not angry with my every sigh.

PART III.

SONNET CXXXI.

*Or, che 'l ciel, e la terra, e 'l vente tace.*

Now silence rules the earth, the air, the sky,  
And every beast and bird in sleep is bound,  
And Night her starry chariot wheels round,  
And Ocean waveless in his bed doth lie.

Pensive I gaze and longing weep, while she  
Who brings sweet torment ever near is found ;  
My state is such that strife, rage, grief abound,  
But her sole image brings some peace to me,

As from a living fountain I derive  
The sweet and bitter food on which I'm fed ;  
One hand alone inflicts the wound and heals ;

And daily that my sufferings may survive,  
A thousand times I'm born, a thousand dead,  
So little hope of healing time reveals.

## PETRARCA.

This is an average-specimen of the author. The second tercet is rather weak, and the first quatrain bears some resemblance to Virgil :—

“Nox erat, et placidum carpebant fessa soporem ;”

and the line in the first tercet :—

“*Una man sola mi risana e punge,*”

resembles Ovid :—

“*Una manus vobis vulnus, opemque feret.*”

PART III.

· SONNET CXXXII.

*Come 'l candido piè per l'erba fresca.*

When her white feet o'er the fresh grassy plain  
Move on in sweet and graceful cadence slow,  
Such virtue from her footsteps seems to flow,  
That flowers revive and ope their buds again.

Love, who in gentle hearts asserts his reign,  
Nor deigns elsewhere his power to bestow,  
Rains from her eyes warm streams of pleasure, so  
That other good or other food were vain.

And with her *walk* and pleasant *look* serene  
Agrees her *voice* most dulcet in its tone,  
And her grave, affable, and humble *mien* ;

These scintillations four—nor these alone,  
Have raised a living, burning fire within,  
So that I quail like night-bird in the sun.

PETRARCA.

SONNET CXLIII.

*Per mezz' i boschi inospiti e selvaggi. j*

Through a secluded forest, wild and drear,  
Where, e'en in arms, men risk a doubtful way,  
I pass secure ; since nought can me dismay,  
Save the bright Sun of Love, that shines so clear.

Singing I go (my thoughts unwise but dear !)  
Of her, who still is nigh, where'er I stay ;  
With dames and damsels there, I see her stray.  
But only pines and beeches see when near.

I seem to hear her when the zephyr sighs  
Through leaves, or birds complain, or water flows  
Amidst green grass whence rippling murmurs come :

The solitude that steeped in silence lies !  
In this dark wood had lulled me to repose,  
But that my Sun lost brightness through the gloom.

PART III.

SONNET CLV.

*Almo Sol, quella fronde ch'io sola amo.*

Life-giving Sun ! thou lovedst first the tree  
That I now only love ; alone 'tis green,  
In its sweet sojourn peerless, as 'twas seen  
By Adam for his ill and ours to be.

Stay and admire it, I ask, I beg of thee  
O Sun ! but ah ! thou flittest from the scene,  
Darkening the hills and placing night between  
The day and that I most desire to see.

The shadow cast by yonder modest hills,  
Where my sweet focus casts its much-loved light,  
Where the great laurel from a small twig grew ;

E'en while I speak, its lengthening darkness steals  
The blessed spot from my so eager sight  
Where dwells my Lady and my heart dwells too.

## PETRARCA.

It is impossible to read this sonnet under the idea that Laura's birthplace and residence were in the city of Avignon. Employing his favourite metaphor of the laurel and referring, as in Sonnet xxvii., to Apollo's love for Daphne, the poet reminds us that he once loved this beautiful tree, as Adam also did in Paradise. We thus have three beautiful women figured under the image of the laurel, namely Eve, Daphne, and Laura. This sonnet was written in winter when the laurel continues to be green, and the poet invokes the Sun (Apollo) to stay and admire it, and laments that the departing light deprives him of the view of Laura's dwelling-place, where the laurel which the poet probably planted soon after his first meeting with Laura, is now a full-grown tree; that is, at the first meeting Laura was scarcely more than a child, but now she is a full-grown woman. In the second tercet he again refers to Laura's dwelling where his heart also dwells.

This sonnet by itself (and there are many others of a like character) is quite sufficient to disprove De Sade's theory that Laura was married, resided in Avignon, and was the mother of eleven children.

There are marks of Petrarch's classical reading in this Sonnet; such as

—“*Cadunt de montibus umbræ.*”—VIRGIL.

“*Quæ præbat latas arbor spatiantibus umbras,  
Quo posita est primum tempore, verga fuit.*”—OVID.

PART III.

SONNET CLIX.

*Stiamo Amor, a veder la gloria nostra.*

O Love ! stand here, and on our glory gaze,  
Things above Nature towering new and fair ;  
Mark well in her those showers of sweetness rare,  
And light that Heaven alone on earth displays.

What art adorns those charms above all praise  
In purple, pearls and gold, not seen elsewhere :  
How sweet her feet and glancing eyes appear,  
In the dark cloister these loved hills upraise.

Flowers of a thousand tints, the herbage green,  
Beneath this ancient sombre oak outspread,  
Are emulous to touch her lovely feet ;

While, in the sky, bright sailing clouds are seen  
Kindled by her, as if in joy, they said :—  
“Those lustrous eyes make Nature calm and sweet.”

PETRARCA.

SONNET CLXIII.

*L'aura serena, che fra verde fronde.*

Fanning my face with a soft murmuring sound,  
The gentle gale sighed through the foliage green,  
And brought to mind when Love, the first time seen,  
Gave the fresh wounds so sweet and so profound ;

And showed that face in which such charms abound,  
Which others hid through jealousy, disdain ;  
Her hair then flowed in waves of golden sheen,  
Which now with bands of pearl and gems is bound.

Her hair she spread so sweetly to the wind,  
Or knit in many a fascinating tie,  
Remembering which I tremble in my mind :

Time has since braided it more soberly ;  
But ah ! those braids my heart so firmly bind,  
That death alone the fastening can untie.

### PART III.

This is one of the numerous sonnets in which the poet makes an untranslatable pun on the name of his lady, *L'aura* "the gentle gale," and *Laura* her name. He complains that she is kept from him by one of three causes, if not by all three. The first indicates parental authority and may include the third, namely disdain; seeing that the lady's aristocratic parents would be likely to disdain a poor exile dependent on the Colonna family. The second may be jealousy on the part of the lady herself; as we know from several of the *Rime* that she was sometimes jealous, and that Petrarch defended himself warmly against the charge or suspicion that might have led to the feeling. That Laura had a husband and that he was jealous, as De Sade and others suppose, cannot be admitted, since there is abundant evidence against such a theory, the source of which has been already referred to (page 105). When Petrarch saw Laura for the first time, her hair was streaming in the wind; that is, she wore it loosely, as the young damsels of the period were wont to do. As she became older she wore it in the costly fashion suited to her rank; and older still, when oppressed by sickness, she wore it in a plainer style.

Two translations of this sonnet are given in Bohn's collection. The first, by the Rev. Dr. Nott, is written in a tone of modern pastoral gallantry, which gives a false impression of Petrarch's tender devotion to that most sacred of all his earthly objects, his Laura. For example, this translator thus renders the first quatrain:—

## PETRARCA.

"The gentle gale that plays my face around,  
Murmuring sweet mischief through the verdant grove  
To fond remembrance brings the time when Love  
First gave his deep although delightful wound."

The next two lines miss the sense of the original :—

"Gave me to view that beauteous face, ne'er found  
Veiled as disdain or jealousy might move."

As if Laura when she saw her lover approaching drew down her veil in a pet.

The second translation by Macgregor includes language that is not in the original nor sanctioned by it, such as "the balmy airs greet my fevered brow," and "recall to my fond heart that face away in scorn since turned," &c.

Such renderings as these only serve to bring a great poet into disrepute among those who do not read him in the original.

PART III.

SONNET CLXVI.

*O bella Man, che mi dstringe 'l core.*

O beauteous Hand ! that binds my heart around,  
And in small space shuts up this life of mine ;  
Hand, for whose honour Nature, Heaven combine,  
That their best workmanship in thee be found.

Soft Fingers ! rough and sharp but to my wound,  
Like five smooth, oriental pearls ye shine ;  
That ye for a time be bare is the design  
Of Love, that rich indeed I may be owned.

And you, dear white and graceful Glove ! my prize,  
That coveredst fair ivory and fresh roses,  
Who in this world e'er saw a spoil so sweet,

Unless it were the veil that hides her eyes ?  
How vain the things man to himself proposes !  
I steal and then make restitution meet.

PETRARCA.

SONNET CLXXIII.

TO THE RHODANUS (THE RHONE).

*Rapido fiume, che d' alpestra vena.*

O rapid river ! from the Alpine side.  
Eroding on, thou and thy name agree ;  
Restless descending, night and day, with me, -  
I led my Love ; Nature alone thy guide ;

Go on before ! sleep never bids thee bide,  
Nor weariness ; but ere thou reach the sea,  
Stay where thy banks more verdant seem to be,  
And where the zephyrs more serenely glide.

My own sweet living Sun thou there wilt meet,  
That gives to thy left bank its grace and bloom :  
Ah ! dare I hope my absence makes her greet !

Let kisses say instead of words, " He'll come ! "  
Kiss thou her beautiful white hands, her feet ;  
My mind goes with thee ; toils my strength consume.

PART III.

SONNET CLXXIX.

*In nobil sanguine vita umile e queta.*

Of noble blood, her life is meek, serene ;  
Though high her intellect, her heart is pure ;  
On youthful stem the fruit has grown mature,  
And the glad mind speaks through the pensive mien ;

These by her Planet and the King of the Stars have been  
Heaped up upon this Lady ;—honour sure,  
High worth, valour, praises meet to endure,  
Such as might task divinest Poet's strain.

Her natural beauty is her fittest dress,  
And love and candour dwell with her always ;  
Her silent mien is eloquence complete :

Some powers, I know not what, her eyes possess  
To make at once night clear, obscure the day,  
E'en honey bitter and the wormwood sweet.

PETRARCA.

SONNET CLXXXIV.

*Onde tolse Amor l'oro, e di qual vena.*

Say ! from what mine did Love the gold supply  
To make those auburn tresses ? from what tree  
Culled he the roses ? Whence, too, gathered he  
Fresh, tender rime ? and these all vivify ?

And whence the pearls, that guide and modify  
Words, flowing sweet and rare, in purity ?  
Whence can so many heavenly beauties be  
Of that dear face, serener than the sky ?

What angels lent their aid, or what high sphere,  
To that celestial song, that moves me so  
That I no more command a tranquil mind ?

What sun produced the lustre, pure and clear,  
Of those bright eyes, whence strife and peace I know,  
Fire in my heart and icy fetters find ?

PART III.

SONNET CLXXXIX.

*Dodici Donne, onestamente lasse.*

In a small bark alone, twelve Ladies bright,  
Rather twelve Stars and in the midst a Sun,  
I saw : weary with honest mirth each one,  
Ploughing the waves ; was ever seen such sight !

The ship of Jason could not so delight  
With golden fleece, which all would now put on ;  
Nor he the Pastor, who caused Troy to mourn ;  
Those twain that caused the world so much affright.

And next I saw them in triumphal car,  
My Laura, with her candid, honest mien.  
Seated apart, in dulcet accents singing ;

No mortal vision, mortal excelling far :  
Blest Tiphys ! blest Automedon ! I ween  
Are ye, those gentle beauties homeward bringing.

## PETRARCA.

The poet describes twelve ladies in a boat on the river, alone (that is, not accompanied by gentlemen), who having landed, drove away in a carriage. Some commentators suppose that these ladies formed the Court of Love, with Laura, the most beautiful of all, as the president, which court flourished at Avignon under Pope Innocent VI. The poet describes them as being *onestamente lasse*, "honestly weary," which has been explained "as if they had been to some church or had been engaged in some honourable exercise, in contradistinction to the weariness produced by dissipation." But Biagioli more sensibly supposes that the poet intends to describe these ladies (who were all of noble birth) as having thrown off their state and usual reserved bearing, and were simply enjoying themselves in their own way and in the absence of the other sex.

The ship of Jason is that which carried the Argonauts and brought back Medea ; while the reference to the golden fleece is a satire on the tendency to put on fine clothes, which the poet elsewhere reproveth. The second ship alluded to is that in which Paris carried off Helen and led to the troubles of Troy. Tiphys is the name of the pilot in the ship *Argo*, and Automedon that of the conductor of the chariot of Achilles.

. PART III.

SONNET CCV.

*Fresco, ombroso, fiorito, e verde colle.*

O flower-enamelled Hill ! fresh, shady, green,  
Where musing now, now bent on minstrelsy,  
An Angel seated there she seems to be,  
And beauty fades before her, beauty's Queen.

Throned in my heart, as she so long has been,  
I would not have my heart return to me,  
But make it follow her fair feet, to see  
Them bless the flowers—my tears their dewy sheen.

At every step my heart's sad throes complain ;  
“ Let pity for him move thy gentle will,  
With tears he's weary, weary with life's pain.”

Fair Hill, she smiles ! unequal parts we fill ;  
Thou'rt Paradise—I heartless rock remain—  
O sacred, fortunate and happy Hill !

PETRARCA.

SONNET CCVII.

*Due rose fresche e colte in Paradiso.*

Two roses fresh and culled in Paradise  
Two days before, at dawn of May-day tide,  
Fair gift ! which he did equally divide  
Twixt two young friends, that favourite old and wise.

With gentle parlance and in smiling guise  
Which e'en the boor to courtesy would guide,  
He caused a flush of amorous light to glide  
O'er either visage, sparkling with surprise.

"On such a pair of lovers never shone  
The sun," he said, sighs mingled with his smiles ;  
Embracing both, from both he turned away ;

Words, flowers he shared, the thought of which alone  
My weary heart with joy and fear yet fills ;  
O happy eloquence ! O joyful day !

PART III.

SONNET CCXXXVIII.

*Se lamentar augelli, o verdi fronde.*

What time birds pipe their plaint, and every tree  
Its green arms rustles in the summer air,  
And on the fresh and flowery banks, to me  
Comes the hoarse murmur of the waters clear ;  
Pensive, I write of Love, while seated here ;  
And her whom Heaven once showed, earth hid, I  
see ;  
I feel her living yet ; though distant, near,  
And answering all my sighs in sympathy.  
I hear her pitying words—" Why thus in woe,  
So prematurely waste thy life, and why  
Cause from those eyes that piteous stream to flow ?  
Weep not for me—I dying, did not die ;  
I only seemed to close my eyes, for know  
I opened them in heaven's own light on high."

PETRARCA.

SONNET CCXLVII.

*I'ho pien di sospir quest' aer tutto.*

I've filled with sighs the circumambient air,  
Climbed the rude hills to view the lovely plain,  
Where she was born, who gave my young heart pain,  
And when mature, still held her conquest there.

She's gone to heaven and left me to despair  
Her sudden flight ; and I cannot restrain  
These eyes, grown weary seeking her in vain,  
From watering with my tears all objects here.

There's not a twig or stone among these hills,  
Nor verdant leaf or branch within these plains,  
Nor flower, nor blade of grass within these vales,

Nor drop of water from these founts distils,  
Nor beast that in these wild woods shelter gains,  
But knows how my sharp grief o'er me prevails.

PART III.

SONNET CCLI.

*Gil occhi di ch' io parlai si caldamente.*

The eyes of which my verse so warmly tells,  
The face, arms, hands, and feet, that bright array  
Of charms that steal me from myself away,  
And every act of mine with strangeness fills :

The crispèd hair that lucent gold reveals,  
The angelic smile, that seemed a heavenly ray,  
Pointing from earth to paradise the way,  
Are now a little dust, that nothing feels.

And yet I live ; but live in grief and pain,  
Deprived of her, my much-loved guiding light,  
In tempest fierce, with shattered bark amain.

But from my amorous muse I now take flight,  
Dried up my poesie's accustomed vein,  
My harp is turned to mourning and 'tis night.

PETRARCA.

SONNET CCLII.

*S' io avessi pensato, che si care.*

Had I but thought my sighs, expressed in rhyme,  
Had aught in them the world would hold so dear,  
I would have sung, when Love at first drew near,  
In happier numbers, accents more sublime.

She who inspired my verse, dead in her prime,  
And wont in every thought of mine to appear,  
Could make my rough dark numbers, sweet and  
clear ;  
But now such aid belongs no more to time.

Certain it was to ease my anguished breast,  
I know not how, that to the Muse I came ;  
I wept, but wept not for the poet's prize,

Nor deemed my verses worthy of their fame ;  
Now when I fain would please, her Spirit blest  
Invites me, mute and weary, to the skies.

PART III.

SONNET CCLIII.

*Soleasi nel mio cor star bella e viva.*

She, beautiful, was wont to dwell in my breast,  
Like a high Dame in humble place and low ;  
But her last step gave me a mortal blow,  
So that I'm dead, while she is a goddess blest.

Despoiled of every good my soul possessed,  
And quenched the light that Love was wont to show,  
This should e'en make the stone to pity grow,  
But no one heeds the heart by grief oppressed.

They inward weep when deaf is every ear  
Save only mine, which Sorrow so doth fill,  
That nought but sighs for good to me remain :

Verily we but dust and shadow are !<sup>1</sup>  
Verily blind and greedy is the will !  
And verily our every hope is vain !

<sup>1</sup> Pulvis et umbra sumus.—HORACE.

PETRARCA.

SONNET CCLIX.

*Quanta invidia io ti porto, avara terra.*

How much, O greedy Earth ! I envy thee  
That her I see no more thou dost embrace,  
And striv'st with me for look of that fair face,  
Whence peace I found 'mid strifes assailing me.

How much I envy Heaven, which eagerly  
Unlocked its door and closed within its space  
The Spirit of that lovely form of grace,  
Though rarely oped for others it may be.

How much I envy too, those souls above  
Her saintly, sweet companionship and love,  
Which I so much desired to be my lot ;

How much that Death, with hard malignant sway,  
Quenching my life in taking hers away,  
Should stand in her lovely eyes and call me not.

PART III.

SONNET CCLX.

*Valle, che de 'lamenti miei se' piena.*

O Valley ! echoing many a mournful lay,  
River ! that my sad tears so often swell,  
Ye sylvan beasts and birds ! ye too that dwell  
In waters which 'tween flowery margins stray !

Ye winds ! that my warm sighs meet on their way,  
Sweet path ! that suits my mournful wanderings well,  
Hills once beloved ! that now of sorrow tell,  
Where Love still calls ; and I, as wont, obey.

In all these objects well-known forms I see,  
While I, alas ! how changed ; my life once bright,  
Is now a source of painful, endless toil.

Here from this path, once trod by her and me,  
Her naked Spirit took its heavenward flight,  
Its lovely tenement to earth a spoil.

PETRARCA.

SONNET CCLXVI.

*Io pensava assai destro esser su l'ale.*

I thought my wings were strong enough to fly,  
    (Not mine, but His the strength that bids them soar,)  
To heights of song worthy of that sweet tie  
Whence Death absolved me, Love would now restore.

More dull and weak for such a work was I  
    Than a small twig bent down with burden sore ;  
He falls, I said, who strives to mount too high,  
Man works but ill, if Heaven deny the power.

The pen of genius never took such flight,  
    Still less my heavy style and feeble lays,  
Where Nature rose to the weaving my sweet tie ;

Love followed her with marvellous delight  
    In so adorning, that thereon to gaze  
Unworthy I, but Fortune favoured me.

PART III.

SONNET CCLXVII.

*Quella per cui con Sorga ho cangiat' Arno.*

For her the Arne I left and Sorga chose,  
Free poverty preferred to servile gain ;  
She changed her sweets to bitterness ; in vain  
I lived on them ; now pine 'neath them, my woes.

How oft since then in vain my purpose rose  
To paint her lustrous charms in vocal strain,  
That she from the coming age love, praise obtain,  
But her fair features all my powers oppose.

At most I dared to sketch but one or two  
Of those bright charms which nowhere else I find ;  
Charms spread o'er her like stars in heaven to view.

Seek I to tell of her celestial mind,  
Which sunlike on the world brief lustre threw,  
My courage, art, and genius lag behind.

PETRARCA.

SONNET CCLXX.

*Quel rosigniol, che si soave piagne.*

Yon nightingale that thrills out his lament,  
May be for nestlings lost, or consort dear,  
With sweetness fills the air, the plains, intent  
In piteous, varied notes to express his care :

And all night long his woes with mine seem blent,  
Reminding me too well of my despair.  
The blame was mine, so far my folly went,  
I thought a goddess had not death to fear.

How soon deceived is he who rests secure !  
Who would have thought eyes brighter than the sun  
Could moulder to a little earth obscure !

And now my cruel loss has made this sure,  
Living and weeping I have had to learn  
That what delights on earth cannot endure.

PART III.

SONNET CCLXXXIII.

*L'aura, e l'odore, etc.*

The air, the odour, and the cooling shade  
Of the sweet laurel, and its sight in bloom,  
Repose and brightness of my life of gloom,  
Death took away, who maketh all things fade.

As when the Sun by his Sister dark is made,  
So my high light is quenched in the like doom :  
I pray that aid 'gainst Death from Death may come ;  
To such dark thoughts by Love am I betrayed !

O beauteous Lady ! thou hast slept brief sleep,  
And waking, found thyself 'mong spirits blest ;  
Where souls their home with the soul's Maker find :

And if my rhymes have any power to keep  
Thee dear among the noblest minds and best,  
On Time's high forehead they thy name will bind.

PETRARCA.

SONNET CCXCV.

*Conobbi, quanto il Ciel gli occhi m'aperse.*

I knew, so far as Heaven had cleared my sight,  
And Love and Study had upborne my wings,  
Things new and beautiful, but mortal things,  
Which every star shed on one object bright.

But my dull vision cannot bear the light  
Of strange vague forms some force celestial brings,  
Immortal, high as their eternal springs,  
Nor my dull intellect conceive their might.

So that, whate'er I sing of her in praise,  
Who, for my praises, prays to God for me,  
Seems but a drop from the abyss to raise :

No song above the singer's mind can be :  
And he who on the sun hath fixed his gaze,  
More bright the light, less clearly can he see.

PART III.

SONNET CCXCVIII.

*Del cibo onde 'l signor mio sempre abbonda.*

The food that feeds my Lord and cannot fail—  
Sorrows and tears—feed, too, my weary heart ;  
Thinking of its deep wounds and bitter smart,  
I often tremble and my cheek grows pale.

But to the couch where I my woes bewail,  
She who'd no first, second, or counterpart,  
Came, such that I well nigh my eyes avert,  
And pitying sat upon its edge a while.

With that same hand I so desired to win  
She wiped my eyes, and speaking, o'er me spread  
Such sweetness that to mortal ne'er could be :

“ To teach despair 'twere useless to begin ;  
Cease weeping ; hast not wept enough for me ?  
I'd have thee live such as thou think'st me dead.”

PETRARCA.

SONNET CCXCIX.

*Ripensando a quel ch'oggi il ciel onora.*

Who heaven adorns, each thought brings back again ;  
That look, when she her golden head inclined ;  
That face ; the angelic modest voice that twined  
My heart with sweetness,—fills it now with pain.

I marvel how I've lived, and life were vain,  
But, ere the dawn, to tranquillise my mind,  
Her pure and lovely presence here I find ;  
More pure than lovely, must in doubt remain.

How of those chaste and pious meetings tell !  
When, all intent on sympathy, she hears  
What woes the history of my love befel.

When to her sense, the morning's light appears,  
She flies to heaven,—the way she knows so well,  
Her eyes are full, each cheek is wet with tears.

PART III.

SONNET CCCII.

*Gli Angeli eletti, e l'anime beate.*

The elect of Angels, and the Spirits blest,  
The denizens of heaven, on the first day,  
My Lady went to swell that bright array,  
Surrounded her with wondering, pious quest.

“ What light is this? who this new beauteous guest?  
Such loveliness,” among themselves they say,  
“ From yonder erring world ne’er found the way,  
In all this age, to this our realm of rest.”

She happy, thus, her changed abode to find,  
Takes equal rank with the most perfect there;  
But now and then she casts a look behind,

To see if I should follow : such her care.  
Hence, all my thoughts are heavenward now  
inclined,  
Knowing, that soon I join her, is her prayer.

PETRARCA.

SONNET CCCV.

*E mi par d'or in ora udire il messo.*

Methinks the messenger each hour I hear  
That Laura sends to call me to her side ;  
Within, without, such changes me betide,  
And in few years so wasted I appear,  
That scarcely can I recognise me here :  
From my accustomed life I've wandered wide,  
And fain would know when Death will come as  
guide,  
Although I know his coming must be near.  
O happy day of my escape ! when I  
From this poor mortal prison-house get free,  
And its frail scattered ruins leave behind :  
Cleaving the darkness that oppresses me,  
Into the bright serene I upward fly,  
And there my Saviour, there my Lady find.

PART III.

SONNET CCCVI.

*L'aura mia sacra al mi stanco riposo.*

Her sacred spirit in my weariness  
Of sleep, breathes o'er me oft ; I courage take  
Say what I've suffered, suffer for her sake,  
Which, while she lived, I never dared confess.

I tell her of that look of tenderness,  
Which bade my long tormenting passion wake :  
How Love a varying sport of me would make,  
One hour in bliss, the next in wretchedness.

In silent pity she my story hears,  
Still gazing on me, and in sympathy,  
She sighs meanwhile, and then begins to weep.

My soul, o'ercome with sadness at her tears,  
And vexed at having caused them, back to me,  
Weeping returns, and I wake up from sleep.

PETRARCA.

SONNET CCCX.

*Volo con l'ali de' pensieri al Cielo.*

Oft borne on wings of thought to heaven away,  
I seem to be like one of those who find  
Their only treasure there, and leave behind  
Their battered tenement to earth a prey.

Quivers my heart with chill, yet sweet dismay,  
When she who paled these cheeks, speaks words  
thus kind :  
“ I love thee and I honour thee, O friend !  
Since thou hast chosen the strait and narrow way.”

She led me to her Lord. On bended knee  
I humbly craved permission there to dwell  
That I His face and hers might still behold.

He answered me : “ Secure is thy destiny ;  
If twenty, thirty years thou’st yet to tell,  
Thou deem’st too long, that time is quickly told.”

PART III.

SONNET CCCXII.

*Tennemi Amor anni ventuno ardendo.*

Love kept me burning one-and-twenty years,  
In the focus glad ; e'en Sorrow Hope made bright,  
But when Madonna took her heavenward flight  
My heart went too ; ten more were given to tears.

Ah me ! a weariness my life appears,  
Sin-laden ; virtue's seeds are wasted quite ;  
The time that's left I fain would use aright  
And dedicate to Him my soul reveres.

I mourn as I in memory backward go  
To years bestowed some good results to win,  
In seeking peace and wrestling with the foe.

Lord ! by whose will life's prison I am in,  
Deign to release me from the eternal woe,  
And let me own, and not excuse my sin.

PETRARCA.

SONNET CV.

TO THE PAPAL COURT AT AVIGNON.

*Fiamma del ciel sulle tue trecce piova.*

Heaven's flame, thou Sinner ! on thy tresses rain,  
Who, scorning bread and water, once thy fare,  
Grow'st rich and great by making others bare,  
Since from each evil act thou gettest gain.

Thou nest of treasons ! hatching every sin,  
That now spreads o'er the world its baneful snare ;  
Wine, lust, excess, thee for their slave declare ;  
To luxury's topmost point thou dost attain.

Old men and damsels through thy chambers glide,  
In wanton glee, each sin obscene the mode,  
And vanity, Beelzebub the guide.

Thou wast not reared in sloth, for thou hast trod,  
Barefoot, rough ways ; naked, the wind defied :  
Thy life is such—its stench ascends to God.

PART III.

SONNET CXIII.

*Ponmi, ove 'l Sol occide i fiori e l' erba ;  
O dove vince lui 'l ghiaccio e la neve :  
Ponmi, ov' è 'l carro suo temprato e leve ;  
Ed ov' è chi cel rende, o chi cel serba :*

*Ponm' in umil fortuna, od in superba ;  
Al dolce aere sereno, al fosco e greve :  
Ponmi alla notte, al di lungo, ed al breve ;  
Alla matura etate, od all' acerba :*

*Ponm' in cielo, od in terra, od in abisso ;  
In alto poggio, in valle ima e palustre ;  
Libero spirto, od a' suoi membri affisso :*

*Ponmi con fama oscura, o con illustre :  
Sarò qual fui : vivrò com' io son visso,  
Continuando il mio sospir trilustre.*

PETRARCA.

Place me where Sol burns up the grass and flower ;  
Or where the ice and snow o'ercome his rays ;  
Place me where rolls his car with temperate blaze ;  
In climes that know not, or that own his power.

Place me where Fortune smiles, or seems to lour :  
'Neath murky sky, or where the zephyr plays ;  
Place me in night, in long or shorter days ;  
In age mature, or in youth's careless hour.

Place me in heaven, on earth, in deepest sea ;  
On mountain high ; in marshy valley lone ;  
Whether I live, or Death possesses me ;

Place me where Fame may own me or disown :  
I still live on, as I was wont to be,  
Still breathing out the same trilustral moan.

### PART III.

Place me where Phœbus burns each herb, each  
flower ;

Or where cold snows, and frost o'ercome his rays :  
Place me where rolls his car with temp'rate blaze ;  
In climes that feel not, or that feel his power.

Place me where Fortune may look bright, or lour ;  
Mid murky airs, or where soft zephyr plays ;  
Place me in night, in long or short-lived days,  
Where age makes sad, or youth gilds ev'ry hour :

Place me on mountains high, in valleys drear,  
In heaven, on earth, in depths unknown to day ;  
Whether life fosters still, or flies this clay :

Place me where fame is distant, where she's near :  
Still will I love ; nor shall those sighs yet cease,  
Which thrice five years have robb'd this breast  
of peace.

*Anon. 1777.*

## PETRARCA.

Mr. D. M. Main in the notes to his *Treasury of English Sonnets* (Manchester, 1880) says, p. 238, "Mr. Tomlinson (*The Sonnet*, &c., p. 81) draws attention to the circumstance that this sonnet is not original to Surrey,<sup>1</sup> but really a pretty close rendering of Petrarch's 113th" which "has been frequently translated." After giving the names of several translators, Mr. Main continues: "And lastly Mr. Tomlinson himself, though without acknowledgment to an anonymous version (*Sonnets and Odes*, translated from the Italian of Petrarch, London, 1777, p. 21), from which he varies in no appreciable degree."

On reading this serious charge I compared my translation with the one referred to, which is given in Bohn's collection (*Sonnets, &c.*, of Petrarch, by various hands, London, 1859), p. 143, and found that if the charge have any foundation, it must rest upon the first seven lines of my translation, the remaining seven being essentially different from the older version, as may be seen by comparing the two which are given above. As to the first seven lines it will be seen on referring to the original, which is also given above, that each line contains a distinct proposition and is closed by a colon or semicolon, so that the lines translate themselves as it were, and two translators aiming at a literal rendering would be likely to produce similar results, especially as in this case, the original suggests the rhymes. I have pointed out in the Introductory Essay prefixed to my translation of

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<sup>1</sup> In some of our anthologies the Earl of Surrey's translation of this sonnet is given as an original production of that poet.

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Dante's *Inferno* how, in the case of Rossetti and Longfellow, where both adopted the same metrical form, and both aimed at a literal rendering, they are all but identical in many passages which are quoted. If the version of 1777 had any influence on my rendering it was an unconscious one. My long acquaintance with Petrarch and his translators has led me to the conclusion that the more the different versions of the same sonnet (however poetical) vary from each other, the more likely are they to be unfaithful to the original. They must take rank among *les belles infidèles* of Count Simeon. "On les aimait pour leur beauté, on les fuyait pour leur trahison." The concluding part of the 1777 version may rank among the infidelities. But the candid reader has the means before him of forming an opinion for himself.

PART IV.

*SONNETS FROM THE SPANISH.*



The introduction of the Italian style into the lyric poetry of Spain, led to a quarrel which lasted a considerable time, divided the critics into two camps, known as the Petrarchists and the Anti-Petrarchists, and produced many amusing literary squibs.

Spain had long been in the possession of lyric poetry in the form of Romances, Redondillas, Cansions or Songs, and other forms, all of which were more distinguished for passion than for sentiment; and her verse was marked by a peculiar system of imperfect rhymes or sounds re-echoing vowels, but not consonants; and hence arose the distinction between consonant and asonant verses. Thus, *noble* and *pone*, *dolor* and *corozon* are *rimas asonantes*.

The sonnet had long been known in Spain through the Provençal and Limosin poets, but the form was not

#### PART IV.

popular, and the Spaniards did not care for the high finish and subtle subjectivity of Petrarch. But after Spain had acquired possessions in Italy the Italian style began to exert its influence, and the two poets who were the first to introduce that style into Castilian poetry were Boscan and Garcilaso de la Vega.<sup>1</sup> It is said that the first idea of imitating the Italian was suggested to Boscan in 1526 by an accomplished Venetian. The Venetian Envoy to the Court of Charles V., one Navagero, who, in common with all cultivated Italians of that age, wrote sonnets and canzoni, also greatly influenced Boscan. He represented to him that the Spanish lyric poetry was barbarous as compared with a sonnet of Petrarch. From that time Boscan, aided by his friend Garcilaso, notwithstanding the clamour raised by those who

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Ticknor has pointed out in his *History of Spanish Literature* that Inigo Lopez de Mendoza, Marquis of Santillana, published in 1444 among other poems seventeen sonnets in the Italian manner: their chief merit was to be found in their careful versification, and they were soon forgotten.

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adhered to the old national forms, adopted the Petrarchan style, which in due course was taken up by other poets. The new method was first patronised by the upper classes; but as the sonnet was frequently introduced into the drama the general public soon became accustomed to the Petrarchan sweetness. The admirers of Boscan became so fascinated with his numbers as to declare their conviction that in the expression of tender passion he sometimes surpassed his model. For example, in the following sonnet, which strikes one almost as a copy of Petrarch, the Spanish critics imagine that in romantic subtlety Boscan is to be preferred :—

*Solo y pensoso en páramos desiertos  
Mis pasos doy cuidadosos y cansados ;  
Y entrambos ojos traigo levantados,  
A ver no vea alguien mis desconciertos.*

*Mis tormentos allí vienen tan ciertos,  
Y van mis sentimientos tan cargados,  
Que aun los campos me suelen ser pesados,  
Porque todos no están secos y muertos.*

PART IV.

*Si oyo balar acaso algun ganado,  
Y la voz del pastor da en mis oídos,  
Allí se me revuelve mi cuidado ;*

*Y quedan espantados mis sentidos :  
Cómo ha sido no haber desesperado,  
Después de tantos llantos doloridos !*

This sonnet, besides being only an imitation, is greatly inferior to Petrarch's in sentiment, expression, and in the delightful termination. The reader has only to compare the following translation with the one given together with the original Italian at page 33 *ante*.

Alone and pensive, to some desert land  
I guide my anxious weary footsteps on,  
And gaze around me oft to see that none  
May mark how I am oppressed by sorrow's hand.

My real woes come like a hostile band,  
My thoughts go heavy laden every one,  
That from the fields the beauty all is gone,  
Dried up and withered they before me stand.

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Hear I of distant flock perchance the sound,  
And falls the shepherd's voice upon mine ear,  
These seem but noises echoing my pain ;

With scattered senses then I gaze around,  
And recognize more fully my despair,  
The fruit of tears so often shed in vain.

Boscan has ninety-two sonnets, the last of which is addressed to Garcilaso ; and Garcilaso has thirty-seven, the twenty-eighth of which is addressed to Boscan. All these sonnets are in the Italian style, although, as Mr. Ticknor has pointed out, there is infused into them a certain Spanish tone and spirit which rescues them in a great degree from the imputation of being copies. The colours are laid on with a bolder hand than the Italian masters were wont to exercise, but we miss in the language and style "that delicate and exact finish which would hardly be possible in Spanish imitations."

Boscan's object was to raise his country's lyric poetry to a higher level by means of Italian models,

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and he succeeded in introducing the Italian eleven syllable and iambic versification in the sonnet and canzone, as well as the *terza rima*, all of which were in advance of existing methods. But as Mr. Ticknor well remarks, "the original and essential spirit of Italian poetry could not be transported to Castile or Catalonia."

Garcilaso does not make use of the asonant. Boscan does so occasionally, as in the tercets of his fifty-first sonnet :—

<i>dadas</i>	{	<i>causó</i>	}	<i>confirmadas</i>
<i>cuchilladas</i>		<i>acuchilló</i>		<i>curadas</i>

in which the two words within brackets are asonants, the other four consonants.

There is a curious sonnet by Lope de Vega in which Boscan and Garcilaso are represented as arriving late at an inn, to which they are unable to gain admittance, and they are astonished at the high-flown poetical language addressed to them by the maid-servant from within (the result we may suppose

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of the introduction of the Italian method), so that they cannot believe themselves to be in Castile, but rather in Biscay, where the people are said to be more than usually stupid. I do not attempt to give the sonnet in the poetical form of the original, but as literally as possible in prose, prefixing the names of the interlocutors :—

*Garcilaso*.—Boscan, we arrive late. Is there an inn ?

*Boscan*.—Call out at the door, *Garcilaso* !

*Maid* (within).—Who is there ? *Garcilaso* or *Boscan*.—Two Knights of Parnassus.

*Maid*.—No room here for armed palestrians to pass the night.

*Gar*.—I do not understand what the waiting-maid says :

Good woman ! what do you mean ?

*Maid*.—That you go away quickly : for already the much abused Occident is showing its limbs (lines or streaks) and the sun paints its rose-coloured portion (orbit).

*Gar*.—Art thou in thy senses, woman ?

*Maid*.—Shelter is denied to the ambulatory guest.

*Gar*.—That in so short a time there should be a jargon like this among Christians !

*Boscan*.—We have no doubt lost our way : Ask where Castile may be ; for I am either out of my senses, or else we are still in Biscay.

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The following is a favourable specimen of Boscan's style :—

#### SONETO LI.

*Quien dice que el ausencia causa olvido.*

Who says that absence breeds forgetfulness  
Deserves that he of all should be forgot ;  
If to love well and truly be thy lot,  
The loved one's absence mars thy happiness.

For memory does not make thy sorrow less ;  
It grows in every solitary spot ;  
Flee as thou mayst, distance assuages not,  
It only feeds the fire of thy distress.

No proffered pleasures can assuage the wound,  
Though at its cause thou cease a while to gaze,  
They do but sink it deeper in thy soul :

So that if thou 'mid many strifes be found,  
Why against them should'st thou a contest raise,  
Seeing it will not, cannot make thee whole ?

Boscan is often so diffuse that it is quite possible to get the full expression of his thought into English

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octosyllabic verse,<sup>1</sup> as in the following Introductory Sonnet :—

SONETO I.

*Nunca de amor estuve tan contento.*

I ne'er was so content with Love  
As when my verses sang his praise ;  
But who would have his mind at ease  
I counsel not his wiles to prove.  
Best thoughts me to this judgment move,  
That each man shun this ill always,  
And none this law e'er disobey  
While I to all a warning prove.  
To all who may these Sonnets read,  
And of sad torments fain would learn,  
Which powers of numbers far exceed,  
I dedicate them. Blest indeed,  
If Heaven in mercy to them turn  
And save them from Love's power dread.

<sup>1</sup> This form is occasionally met with among the Italian sonneteers, as in a sonnet by Antonio Somai :—

*" Or che Clori sulla sponda  
Di quel Rio dolce riposa  
Colle fronte menza ascosa,  
Tra la sparsa chio ma bionda," &c.*

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The same fault of diffuseness applies to Garcilaso, but it is not necessarily connected with poverty of thought ; for it may often be traced to the Spanish method of sounding all the vowels whether terminal or initial ; instead of the Italian method of elision, whereby fourteen or fifteen syllables may often be read as a line of eleven ; as for example in Petrarch :—

*“ Donne e donzelle, e sono abeti e faggi.”*

The following is Garcilaso's twenty-third Sonnet :—

*En tanto que de rosa y azucena  
Se muestra la color en vuestro gesto,  
Y que vuestro mirar ardiente, honesto,  
<sup>1</sup>Enciende el corazon y lo refrena ;  
  
Y en tanto que el cabello, que en la vena  
Del oro se escogió, con vuelo presto,  
Por el hermoso cuello blanco enhiesto  
El viento mueve, esparce y desordena :*

<sup>1</sup> Variation :—

*“ Con clara luz la tempestad serena.”*

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*Coged de vuestra alegre primavera,  
El dulce fruto, antes que el tiempo airado  
Cubra de nieve la hermosa cumbre.*

*Marchitará la rosa el viento helado,  
Todo lo mudará la edad lijera,  
Por no hacer mudanza en su costumbre.*

At the beginning of the century Mr. Wiffin published a translation of Garcilaso. The following is his mode of rendering the sonnet before us, and it will be seen that he was unable to make up his lines without a good deal of padding; the words in italic are not in the original:—

As, *love*, the lily and *purpureal* rose  
Show their *sweet* colours on thy *chaste, warm* cheek,  
Thy radiant looks, *angelically* meek  
Serene the tempest to divine repose,  
And as thy hair, which *for its birthright* chose  
The opal's dye, upon the whitest neck  
Waved by the winds *of heaven without a check*,  
In *exquisite* disorder falls and flows;  
Gather the rich fruit of thy mirthful spring,  
Ere angry Time around thy temples shed

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The snows *of hasting age* ; his icy wing  
Will wither the *fresh* rose, *however red* ;  
And changing not his custom, *quickly* change  
*The glory of all objects in his range.*

It is quite easy to render this sonnet in short lines ;  
in which form indeed it more faithfully represents the  
original, than in the longer lines surcharged with  
expletives.

While yet the lily and the rose  
Display the colour of thy face,  
And in that bright frank look we trace  
What moves and checks the heart that glows ;

While yet thy hair its gold vein shows,  
And the wind comes with rapid pace  
To raise it, tangle and displace,  
The lovely white neck to disclose ;

O gather from thy joyous spring  
Sweet fruit 'ere angry Time draw near  
To crown that beauteous head with snow,

To nip the rose 'neath icy wing,  
Quite change the joyous age, that so  
He no wise change his customs here.

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DON DIEGO HURTADO DE MENDOZA.

1505-1575.

*Vuelve el cielo : el tiempo huye y calla.*

The heavens revolve : Time wings his noiseless flight,  
Wakes, as from sleep, because of thy delay ;  
Desire increases more, hope fades away,  
As greater distance shuts thee from my sight.

My soul is like the field where warriors fight ;  
Mistrust and confidence their forces sway ;  
Faith whispers confidence in love alway,  
Suspensions come and faithlessness invite.

I mutely suffer, yet I ask of thee,  
When will that happy time for me be seen  
Of freedom from the chain thy presence gives ?

I seek an answer from thy cruelty :  
What I shall be thou'lt judge by what I've been,  
Since greater safety in thy absence lives.

PART IV.

FERNANDO DE HERRERA.

1534-1597.

*Lloro solo mi mal, y el hondo rio.*

By the deep stream all lonely I complain,  
The turbid waves murmur my plaint along ;  
'Tis time, I say, O Love ! in my sad song,  
That thou should'st put an end to all my pain.

Her absence were enough, thy tortures vain,  
Vain as the hopes thou'st cherished in me long ;  
And now for flight thou plumest thy pinions strong,  
When I thy truth and honour would maintain.

'Tis time, O Love ! that this so cruel woe  
Should end, or from my life erased should be  
Whate'er of hope or strong desire is found :

So great the ill, the suffering fails to show ;  
The injury so deeply sinks in me,  
That in my inmost soul I feel the wound.

SPANISH.

FROM THE SAME.

*Rojo Sol, que con hacha luminosa.*

O red red Sun ! that with thy torch of flame  
Colourest the blue expanse of yonder sky,  
Hast seen such beauty in thy course on high,  
As the sweet light that makes my Lady's fame ?

Ye bland and amorous Zephyrs ! that proclaim  
Your flight in every balmy kissing sigh,  
When her rich golden veil in passing by  
Ye raise, can ye more lovely tresses name ?

O Moon ! night's glory ! ye illustrious choir  
Of wandering planets and fixed stars of gold ;  
Have ye ere thought of those twin stars, her eyes ?

Zephyrs, pure Sun, Moon, lights of golden fire,  
Hear ye my lamentations manifold ?  
Or beauty see more deaf to amorous sighs ?

PART IV.

LUIS DE GONGORA Y ARGOTE.

1561-1627.

SONETO AL GUADALQUIVIR.

*Rey de los otros rios caudaloso.*

Majestic King of other rivers thou !  
Well known of fame, whose crystal waters shine,  
While the rough garlands of the mighty pine  
Adorn thy wavy hair and gird thy brow.

When from thy caverned nest descending now  
From Segura, or nearer sources join,  
That Andalusia form thy royal line,  
Proud is thy motion, foaming, swift thy flow :

O tell me, I, who love thy fertile strand,  
And tread thy noble sands with humble feet,  
Hast thou, for I've long time enamoured been,

'Mong all the ruddy damsels of the land,  
Whose charms, their mirrored charms, in thee oft  
meet  
Such grace or beauty as in Chloris seen ?

SPANISH.

LOPE DE VEGA.

1562-1635.

*No tiene tanta miel Atica hermosa.*

Not Attica can so much honey bring,  
Nor ocean throw so many weeds ashore,  
More oaks we count not hills or mountains o'er,  
Nor flowers brought forth by the delicious spring ;  
Nor rains sad winter, nor dry autumn fling  
Her grapes with generous hand, a mighty store,  
Nor can fierce war of arrows scatter more  
With bows in eager hands to give them wing ;  
Nor with more golden eyes looks out the sky,  
When night serene rules softly o'er the land,  
Nor waves more numerous the mighty main,  
Fishes not more the sea, birds air supply,  
Libra has not more grains of arid sand  
Than for Lucinda I give sighs in vain.

PART IV.

LOPE DE VEGA.

*La Vida es Sueño* (Life is a Dream).

*Si culpa el concebir, nacer tormento.*

If we're conceived in sin and born in pain,  
If life's a battle, and death end the fray,  
And man becomes a clod, to worms a prey,  
After the worms but dust and air remain ;  
If nothing's left, and nothing's all his gain,  
Beauty a flower, ambition tyrant's sway,  
Glory and fame, but empty thoughts alway,  
And every thought of intellect but vain :  
If but to drown why travel on this sea ?  
Why should we pass our lives in endless strife ?  
Why think of aught but how we may be free ?  
What use is honour or distinguished life,  
Or fame, when to Oblivion we must flee ?  
Why build when Fate stands by with cruel knife ?

SPANISH.

GASPAR GIL POLO.

CIRCA 1564.

*No es ciego Amor, mas yo lo soy, que guio.*

Love is not blind, but I am blind, who lead  
My will to seek the road to misery ;  
Love is no child, but I am one, to be  
At once in smiles and tears, in hope and dread.

To number Love's desires were mad indeed !  
His fire is fierce and strong as destiny ;  
My thoughts mount high upon his pinions free,  
But vain, ah vain ! the hope on which I feed.

No chains nor arrows in his power has Love  
Wherewith to bind and wound free minds and sane ;  
He has what we confer on him of power :

In spite of Poet's lies, he still must prove  
The dream of fools, the idol of the vain :  
Behold how black the god that we adore !

PART IV.

LUPERICO LEONARDO DE ARGENSOLA.

1565-1613.

*Imágen espantosa de la muerta.*

A wondrous effigy of Death art thou,  
O cruel Sleep ! thou comest not again,  
Thou'st severed from me thy too fragile chain,  
Thou only comfort that my grief may know !  
To the strong castle of each tyrant go,  
Where jasper walls their gilded roofs sustain :  
Or where rich churl in narrow bed is lain ;—  
Wake them with sweat of terror on their brow.  
Let one behold the folk in tumult rise,  
And burst in fury through his well-barred gate,  
Or yield himself to treason's sword a prize :  
Let the other see one on his treasure wait  
With a false key, or how fell force he tries ;  
And wake up Love from dreams of happy fate.

SPANISH.

BARTOLOMÉ LEONARDO DE ARGENSOLA.

1566-1633.

TERCETS, 123—231—

*Suelta es cabello al céfiro travieso.*

The restless Zephyr has unloosed thy hair,  
To recompense thee, Cynthia ! a while,  
For ties and braids which the long hours beguile,  
No Grace can aid, or aiding but despair.

More lovely 'tis than when adorned with care ;  
Its flowing undulations seem to smile :  
Say ! can the laws of ornamental toil  
Succeed in giving anything so fair ?

The hair of tottering kings may need display,  
And waves and mines of the far distant East  
Ambitious pearls and splendid jewels send :

Let not thy hair with curls or gems be drest ;  
'Twill grow thy noble forehead to commend,  
And show its height ;—not rules of art obey.

PART IV.

DE QUEVEDO.

1580-1645.

*Miré los muros de la patria mía.*

I saw my country's walls once proudly stand,  
Though now alas ! they're tottering to decay ;  
In the quick movement of the present day  
Old Valour, wearied, ceases to command.

I sought the plain ; released from winter's hand  
The stream supplies the thirsty soil alway ;  
The flocks send plaintive notes from the mountain's way,  
Whose shadows steal the daylight from the land.

I seek my house ; 'tis soiled with ancient dust  
As if long usage had outworn it quite ;  
My staff is shorter and its strength is less :

My sword is conquered by Time's growing rust ;  
Nothing I find around that meets my sight  
But bears the mark Death can alone impress.

SPANISH.

FRANCISCO DE MEDRANO.

CIRCA 1617.

*Cuando invidioso el tiempo haya robado.*

When envious Time has thinned thy head  
Which Flora views with so much fear,  
And Summer, which I hold so dear,  
And all my youthful beauty's fled ;

That I'm untrue shall ne'er be said ;  
My love though humble is sincere ;  
The fire that in me burns so clear  
Shall ne'er the cold of winter dread.

But like the dying swan I'll be,  
And more divinely will I sing,  
While I resign my latest breath :

From the expiring flame we see  
One parting flash of brightness spring :  
My brightest fire shall be in death.

PART IV.

AGUSTIN DE MORETO Y CABAÑA.

CIRCA 1660.

*Vistoso un jilguerillo se pasea.*

A goldfinch gay that passed when I was near,  
Pouring his heart out in melodious strain,  
As if in contest with the flowery plain,  
Was seen and captured by fair Amaltea.

His liberty now seems to him more dear  
Than when he deemed nought could his wing  
restrain ;

He sings in prison still his wild refrain,  
As if to make captivity less drear.

Like the gay goldfinch, I was blythe and free,  
Contending with the dawn in cheerfulness,  
When Love's so subtle net entangled me ;

Ta'en to his prison, oh, what pleasantness !  
Oh Love ! how much in error they must be  
Who chide thy happy meshes and not bless.

SPANISH.

PADRE PEDRO DE QUIROS.

CIRCA 1670.

*Ruiseñor amoroso, cuyo llanto.*

O amorous Nightingale ! whose tender strain  
Would make the oak some touch of pity show,  
O that thy voice were echo of my woe !  
O that thy song but uttered all my pain !  
Then Hope might whisper sighs were not in vain,  
And for the good thou would'st for me bestow,  
I should be heard, but when I scarcely know,  
By her who binds me in Love's magic chain.  
What ill does that sonorous torrent tell,  
Dawn wakening and sweet flowers the dawn to  
cheer ?  
Sing on, O Nightingale ! for me as well ;  
So pipe thy notes that I in them appear :  
Sing'st thou my woes with such ecstatic swell,  
The very stars will list thy voice to hear.

PART IV.

CALDERON. 1600-1681.

From *El Principe Constante*.

The Prince compares our fleeting life with the flowers, and is answered by the Infanta in another sonnet in which life is compared to the stars, "The beautiful flowers of night, which born each night, do not the night survive."

*Estas, que fueron pompa y alegria.*

Through them the splendour, cheerfulness, delight,  
Wake up to life at dawning of the day ;  
Our sympathy were vain when evening gray  
Folds them to sleep in the arms of pulseless night.

The shadows now are quickly put to flight,  
And Iris striped in gold, white, red array,  
Our human life must chide, that such display  
In so short time she lavish on the sight.

The roses wake with early dawn to bloom,  
And by their blooming, quickly they grow old ;  
Each bud contains its cradle and its tomb :

And thus we read men's fortune in the flowers,  
Born in a day, they die ere day is told,  
And ages pass as if they were but hours.

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